

Congress tackles power bill amid protests

STORY
ON PAGE A2

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Whodunit? Mike tags Abu Sayyaf

BY M. MARFIL
FIRST Gentleman
Jose Miguel "Mike"
Arroyo yesterday
lashed out at the Abu
Sayyaf following the
WHODUNIT/ A20

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

MONDAY, MAY 28, 2001 ** 80 PAGES 5 SECTIONS VOL.16 NO. 169 P15

WHAT'S INSIDE

- SMC eyes Zest-O takeover
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- Bucks leads 76ers, 2-1
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- Malonzo warns of 'crisis'
METRO / A25

AT A GLANCE

- 5 a.m.
20 armed men dock at the Dos Palmas Arreceffi Island Resort, proceed to nine cottages and seize 17 guests and three resort personnel.
- 6:15 a.m.
Fishermen see raiders' "kumpit" speeding toward south.
- 8:15 a.m.
AFP Western Command dispatches 2 Navy vessels, S211 aircraft to intercept kidnappers.

Busuanga Island
Cullion Island



THE DOS PALMAS: Puerto Princesa City's only upscale resort on Arreceffi Island.

Bandits abduct 20 in Palawan resort

Hostages include three Americans

BY JOFELLE P. TESORIO AND GERALDFORD TICKE
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—At least 20 heavily armed men, believed to be members of the Abu Sayyaf bandit group, abducted 20 people, including three Americans, from the upscale Dos Palmas Arreceffi Island Resort here at dawn yesterday.

The military immediately launched a massive search by air and sea. Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Diomedio Villanueva said the group apparently had been tracked down several hours after the raid.

President Macapagal-Arroyo condemned the abduction as a "dastardly criminal act of desperate, ruthless bandits." She gave assurance that the government would "do everything within its powers" to ensure the safety of the hostages.

She canceled her visit to Baguio City where she was to act as principal sponsor at the wedding of actor Aga Muhlach and actress Charlene Gonzales today.

Dos Palmas, the only high-end resort at Honda Bay in Puerto Princesa City, is 600 kilometers southwest of Manila. It is an hour by boat from Puerto Princesa.

Wearing bonnets and armed with a machinegun and assault rifles, the intruders docked at the receiving area of the resort around 5 a.m.

They were on board a big *kumpit*
BANDITS/ A21

Gov't braces for fallout on tourism

AFTER struggling to lure back foreign tourists following the Abu Sayyaf's high-profile kidnappings last year, the government is again bracing for an economic fallout from two armed raids on upscale beach resorts in Mindanao the past week.

Even so, Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon described the attack on the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan as just "a temporary setback" to the government's efforts to attract foreign tourists.

In a talk with newsmen in Puerto Princesa City, Gordon said he expected "things to return to normal as what happened in other countries that experienced the same incidents."

In an interview with Agence
TOURISM/ A19

Malaysia on high alert for kidnappers

MALAYSIAN security forces in the eastern state of Sabah have been placed on high alert to prevent a group of Filipino kidnappers holding 20 hostages from slipping into the country.

The Bernama news agency quoted a spokesperson of the Malaysian Navy as saying it had been informed early Sunday about the raid on the Dos Palmas

resort off Palawan. "We have been told about it and we have put our men on full alert... they are now on the ground," he said without elaborating.

Palawan is about two hours' boat ride from Kudat on the northern tip of the Malaysian state of Sabah where more than half a million Filipinos live. Many of them are illegal immigrants from Mindanao.

Sunday's dawn attack on the Dos Palmas resort off Palawan island was believed staged by the notorious Abu Sayyaf guerrillas, who struck twice in Malaysia last year.

They fled with the 20 tourists and resort workers in a speedboat that was later found abandoned. National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said the kidnappers and their hostages had been spotted near

Bugsuk Island off Palawan's southern tip.

"We are not 100-percent positive, but it is very, very likely," Golez said.

"Right now they are very close to the Malaysian boundary and the government is now coordinating with Malaysian authorities as we have a joint border crossing agree-
MALAYSIA/ A21

Macapagal faces severe test in power reform bill

BY AMANDO DORONILA

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is putting her administration on the line on a major reform legislation—the new power reform bill—in a bold move to avert severe power shortages in

the next few years. Her call for Congress to hold a four-day special session beginning today to pass the bill is an audacious gamble that faces huge obstacles.

First, she is pushing legislation—the Electric Power Industry

Restructuring Act—that is so controversial that it has languished in Congress for six years within the life span of the Ramos and Estrada administrations.

Second, she is pushing uphill this huge Sisyphean boulder in a lame duck 11th Congress, which has absolutely no bond with her four-

month-old administration.

Third, she is opening a new battlefield at a time when she is trying to consolidate her administration after it has been rocked by the May 1 rebellion.

Fourth, her multilateral alliance that propelled her accession to the
GMA/ A6

Drama unfolds: Can Recto hang on to victory?

BY GERALD G. LACUARTA
AND CHRISTINE AVENDAÑO

CAN 13th placer Ralph Recto hang on to his post as the Commission on Elections counts this week 15 remaining certificates of canvases (COCs) containing six to seven million votes?

The administration's People Power Coalition (PPC) is optimistic that Recto would make it after the votes, mostly from the Visayas and Mindanao, are counted.

Recto dropped to 13th place on Saturday after he stayed in the 10th place two days before.

PPC spokesperson Conrado Limcaoco said that "barring any incident," Recto would make it and would even win by about half a million votes against 14th-placer Juan Ponce Enrile when the remaining votes from Mindanao were counted.

DRAMA/ A19

Calauit sanctuary starving to death

BY JERRY ESPLANADA

(First of two parts)

CALAUIT ISLAND, Palawan—The head of the National Museum's zoology division has yet to see the 27 giraffes, among other African animals, that roam this wildlife sanctuary which has been described by critics as a "living monument to (the late dictator) Ferdinand Marcos."

"We have received reports that they are not as tall and robust as those found on the African continent. *Medyo bansot*

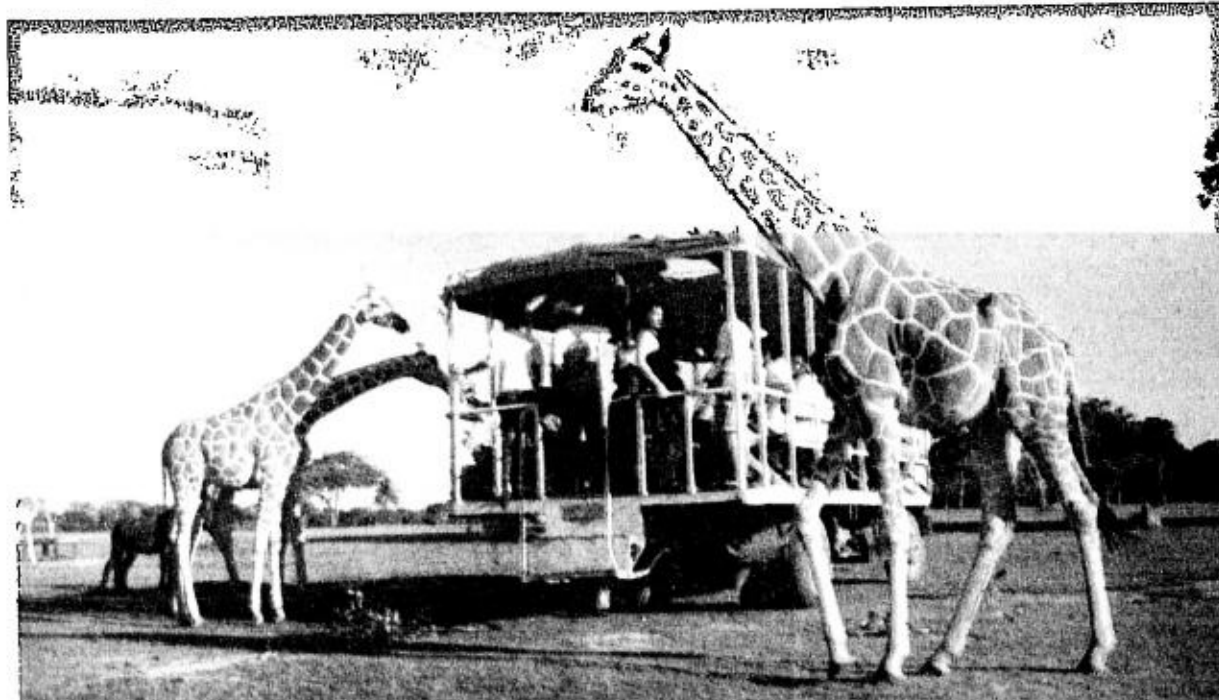
daw (They're a little small)," said Rodolfo Caberoy, whose museum group has been considering doing a study on the introduction of exotic species here.

A South African animal expert who visited the sanctuary a few years ago made the same observation, said Mundita Lim, assistant director of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Lim, who has been to the sanctuary a couple of times, confirmed the observation.

The giraffe is the tallest of all mammals and one of the four largest land animals. A full-grown male giraffe could reach a height of 19 feet or more. A large male often weighs a ton and a half.

CALAUIT/ A20



GIRAFFES are reportedly getting leaner on the Calauit Island sanctuary because of inadequate government care and inadequate funding.
JERRY ESPLANADA



Power bill foes step up attack

They said Section 28 limits the ownership of all power firms regardless of size to 15 percent, with the exception of Meralco and a holding company owned by the Aboitiz Group which operates power utilities in

In Lucena City, the coalition of multisectoral organizations in Quezon, called on the members of Congress to boycott the special session today and join their constituents in the streets protesting the proposed measure.

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Power bill a major test for GMA

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo faces her first major test in the quest for economic reforms when Congress opens a special session today to consider an ambitious but controversial plan to overhaul the country's crisis-ridden power sector.

The four-month-old Macapagal-Arroyo administration has promised that the reforms would end monopolies, encourage the entry of more players and generate competition that will benefit consumers in terms of better rates and services.

If the proposed law is adopted by the outgoing Congress, the crisis-battered economy will receive a shot in the arm in terms of new direct investments and access to nearly \$1-billion in soft loans from multilateral institutions.

Failure to pass the bill, however, will make power outages nearly certain, discourage foreign investors and ultimately dampen economic growth, analysts warn.

"Passage of the power bill is more than just enacting a law," said Alex Magno, president of the Foundation for Economic Freedom think tank.

"It is a highly symbolic gesture of a new type of governance that insists on economic rationality against well-entrenched orthodoxies and powerful vested interests," he said.

Magno said the bill was the "first major piece of legislation" and "will set the tone of economic reform" under Ms. Macapagal, who stormed to power in January following the people power uprising that ousted her corruption-tainted predecessor, Joseph Estrada.

Congress has held back crucial energy re-

forms for nearly a decade.

The Philippines, which has the highest electricity prices in Southeast Asia, practices a unique system of cross-subsidies, under which manufacturing plants subsidize residential power users.

The higher power costs in manufacturing are passed on to consumers, making the economy uncompetitive, analysts said.

But social activist groups have argued that the power reform bill is anti-Filipino and favors only big businesses. They have threatened to launch a "people power" campaign to block its passage.

Opposition legislators charge that Ms. Macapagal is rushing through the landmark proposals without proper study and feedback, instead of waiting for the newly elected Congress to open in July.

A key feature of the bill is the privatization of the debt-laden state-run National Power Corp. in order to free up government funds used to subsidize the country's main electricity producer.

"This landmark piece of legislation must be passed immediately as the first step in restoring the competitiveness of our industries, provide relief to consumers and stop the financial hemorrhaging of Napocor," the President has said.

The bill would allow the sale of Napocor's generating plants at a bargain price of \$4.5 billion to offset its current liability of \$6.7 billion.

Critics, however, are crying foul as this would burden the taxpayers who could be assuming part of Napocor's debts.

But the government says it cannot compromise on this key issue.

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QUAL

Bayan Muna tops party-list polls

BY GERALD LACUARTA

PARTY-LIST candidate Bayan Muna appears on the way to sending all three of its nominees to Congress.

As of May 26, the Commission on Elections official count showed that Bayan Muna had garnered 1,306,436 votes—about 13.46 percent of the total party-list votes.

Erstwhile leader MAD slid to second place with 1,053,073 votes. The Comelec count covered about 70 percent of the national canvassing.

Bayan Muna's first nominee is former National Democratic Front spokesperson Satur Ocampo. Its other

nominees are militant leaders Crispin Beltran, chair of the Kilusang Mayo Uno, and Liza Masa, chair of the women's group Gabriela.

Under the party-list system, a party-list group gets a seat in the House of Representatives if it garners at least 2 percent of the votes cast for the party-list elections.

It wins another seat if it gets 4 percent of the votes, and a third one for 6 percent of the votes. A party-list group is allowed a maximum of three seats.

The Veterans Federation Party, Mamamayan Ayaw sa Droga (MAD) and Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives might also get three seats each in the House of Representatives as they have passed the 6-percent mark as

of the latest count.

If the current trends continue, eight other party-list groups, which have reached the 2 percent minimum requirement, are assured of a seat each.

These are the Partido ng Maralitang Pilipino-Pinatubo Party, Cooperative Natco Network Party (Coop-Natco), Nationalist People's Coalition, Ang Bagong Bayani-OFW Labor Party (OFW), Akbayan, Buhay Hayaang Yumabong (Buhay), Lakas-NUCD, and the Citizens Battle Against Corruption (Cibac).

Also in the running with votes of 1.7 to 1.9 percent are the Philippine Medical Association, Bagong Bayani Organization (Bagong Bayani) and Luzon Farmers Party (Butil).

The nominees of MAD are actor Richard Gomez and Chief Supt. Jewel Canson. Cibac, however, has filed a petition with the Comelec seeking the suspension of the proclamation of Gomez on the grounds of his allegedly false claim that he was a registered voter.

Buhay is known to be a satellite of El Shaddai. Its main nominee is Rene Velarde, said to be a relative of El Shaddai leader Bro. Mike Velarde.

Lakas-NUCD's main nominee is former Justice Secretary Silvestre Bello III, while the Bagong Bayani Organization has former Flagships Secretary Robert Aventura as its nominee. The main nominee of PMP-Pinatubo is actress Kuh Ledesma.

DEBRIEFING OVER

Was Noel Buan a walk-in spy?

BY CARLITO PABLO

THOUGH it has been almost two months since he was released by his communist captors and two weeks since his debriefing was completed, it appears Army Maj. Noel Buan will not be seeing any new assignment soon.

Officially, the Army command says there will be no new command for Buan to give him "time to enjoy being with his family."

"He might be sent for schooling," said Lt. Col. Jose Mabanta, the Philippine Army spokesperson.

Sources said, however, that military leaders are still evaluating Buan's case as questions about the circumstances of his capture have surfaced in the course of his debriefing.

A debriefing is conducted by the intelligence service to determine the fitness of a military or police personnel who was captured and later released by enemies of the state.

Buan was the intelligence officer of the AFP Southern Luzon Command when he was reportedly captured by the Melito Glor Command of the communist New People's Army near Lucena City in 1999.

It appears, however, that Buan had "voluntarily walked in upon the invitation of the NPA," the source said.

The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Buan had accepted an invitation to see in person how the NPA and the communist movement operated in those areas where they have some influence.

"Buan went there for some sort of personal exploration," the source said.



BUAN: A sense of idealism

"Noel had this sense of idealism that somehow converged with the rebels' view of injustice, oppression and the like," the source said, adding that Buan had had previous contacts with the rebels.

The source said that even before he was captured, Buan had had conversations with figures associated with the Left like Satur Ocampo, former spokesman of the underground National Democratic Front and nominee for the House of the front-running Bayan Muna partylist group.

The source said Buan had been with the rebels starting on July 7, 1999 and that it was only after two days that he was declared a captive and immediately shipped to Mindoro Oriental.

"The reason Buan became a tough prisoner (for the communist rebels) was because he felt betrayed. He never thought he would be taken prisoner," the source said.

The source confirmed that Buan tried to escape from his captors in Mindoro Oriental but was recaptured by native Mangyans.

"Buan would sometimes refuse to eat or be handcuffed. He became confrontational following

his capture," the source said.

But he was confident that he would not be executed.

The information provided by the source contradicts the NPA's version of what happened.

The NPA had earlier claimed that a special operation was launched to capture Buan because of his supposed crimes against the people, particularly his activities as an intelligence officer.

According to previous statements released by the rebels, Buan was setting up an elaborate trap to capture ranking rebel leaders in Southern Tagalog by posing as a sympathetic military officer who could provide rebels with confidential military information.

The rebels had also prepared an "indictment sheet" against Buan who was supposed to be tried before a "people's court."

But the source claimed that in the two days that Buan spent as a visitor of the rebels, he was enticed to join the rebel movement. Buan refused and this precipitated his capture.

"It was more of a personal exploration rather than an intelligence mission," the source said.

In a previous interview before Buan's release, Brig. Gen. Cristolito Balaing said Buan was a capable intelligence officer who could speak the rebels' language.

Balaing, who was one of Buan's former commanding officers, said that during their stint at the 1st Scout Ranger Battalion, Buan was able to understand how a rebel operates and thinks by meticulously poring over captured documents, handbooks and even personal letters.

Balaing said that aside from these skills, Buan was a very affable person who was easily liked by ordinary people he came in touch with.

The source said Buan is reportedly planning to come out with a book on his experience as a captive.

"I personally don't know if the book plan has the blessing of the Armed Forces," the source said.

The military has yet to make a decision on whether Buan would now be allowed to be interviewed by the media even though his debriefing was completed more than a week ago.

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'Send Jimenez to US'

THE EQUAL Justice for all Movement (E-Just) has joined the clamor to have Mark Jimenez extradited to the United States even after the former Estrada crony won as congressman of the fifth district of Manila.

E-Just, a group composed of more than 25 organizations of lawyers and civil society, said that while it "commended the

Macapagal-Arroyo administration in finally resolving to extradite Jimenez to the US, it demands that the Department of Justice act with dispatch" in sending him back to the US."

"Dilatory tactics will once again be resorted to by lawyers of Jimenez," said E-Just spokesperson lawyer Leonardo de Vera in a statement.

Jimenez is facing mail

fraud and tax evasion charges as well as accusations that he made illegal contributions to the Democratic Party when former President Bill Clinton ran for reelection in 1996.

E-Just underscored the need to expedite the extradition of Jimenez to "prove to our people that even a powerful congressman, who is enmeshed in the billions of pesos corruption deals of Estrada and who is not entitled to immunity, is not above the law."

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GMA faces severe test in power reform bill

(From page A1)

presidency after the People Power II upheaval is being sundered by the question of whether to put

deposed President Joseph Estrada under house arrest.

The power reform bill and what to do with Estrada are severe tests for the Macapagal ad-

ministration requiring deployment of political resources.

Audacity

Grabbing the two issues by the horns requires audacity that defies the time-honored rule that one does not fight wars on two fronts and expects to win.

The norm of Filipino presidents is that they call special sessions of Congress elected with them. Ms Macapagal is treading on unexplored minefield. The 11th Congress is not her Congress. It has no affinity with her; and she has no affinity with it.

She has enlisted allies in the lame duck Senate who have supported the bill such as Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Senators John Osmeña and Sergio Osmeña III.

John Osmeña, chair of the Senate energy committee, heads the Senate representation in the congressional bicameral committee where the bill is stuck.

But for every ally who rallied behind her call is an equal number of opponents, not the least being Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, who claims the dubious honor of being the most disruptive senator the chamber has ever had, and Senate President Pro Tempore Blas Ople. Enrile argues that the bill is anti-poor—an argument that betrays the contagion of Estrada's lip service to the poor.

Homework

The President has done the preliminary homework to dismantle opposition in the Senate and in the House of Representatives. She has met the Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council (Ledac) to iron out differences among the legislators.

Her energy secretary, Jose Camacho, has used his experience as an international banker to explain the supposed advantages of the bill. The President has met opponents from the Left, who criticize the bill as a surrender to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank, and from various nongovernment organizations, who consider the bill disadvantageous to consumers.

The Left and the multisectoral groups are her allies in Edsa II and they are threatening to go to the streets again to block the reform bill. But the context this time is different. In Edsa II, the clamor was to end a venal government whose incompetence and corruption were pushing the country to economic collapse. The complex power bill requires not parliament of the streets to correct its perceived flaws but debate, and the venue of that option is available—Congress.

If the President fails to push the bill in the special session, it will prove not only her audacity but more so, her foolhardiness in fighting on two fronts. But that does not prove anything. Defeat in her bid will expose her vulnerability and open her to challenges in the next Congress where her hold in the Senate is precarious and where Lakas, her party, may not win a clear majority.

The President's gamble on the 11th Congress appears to have been decided by the assessment that she has a better chance of passing the conference report in this Congress than in the 12th Congress.

Back to Square One?

As John Osmeña has correctly pointed out, if the bill is not passed in this special session, the bill will go back to square one in the next Congress.

This means that addressing the issue of power reform, including privatizing the National Power Corp., reducing electricity rates, making the industry more competitive, and drawing loans from the World Bank and other foreign banks, will have to wait for another three years or more.

This is probably the reason why Ms Macapagal is compelled to launch a major economic reform even before the new Congress convenes and even if it means taking huge political risks.

In a paid ad, a number of economic and business organizations have urged the passage of the power bill. They include the Makati Business Club, Federation of Philippine Industries, and the Semiconductors and Electronic Industries of the Philippines, to mention a few.

They cited the need of the energy sector for investments worth \$1 billion a year for the next 10 years. These investments can't be raised from local sources. The passage of the bill is argued to be a signal to foreign investors that they are welcome in the industry.

The Palace is pushing the bill partly to enable the country to get a total of \$950 million in fresh loans from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the Japan Export Import Bank to finance development projects.

Napocor debt

But those opposing the bill are concerned that while the privatization of Napocor, a key element in the bill, would fetch around \$4.5 billion to \$5.2 billion, the amount would not be enough to pay for Napocor's huge debt. Napocor, according to one study, would end up with a shortfall of \$9.5 billion.

The shortfall will leave the government with a net "stranded cost" of P352 billion. Camacho said the government had committed to absorb up to P200 billion. "This will slash the stranded cost to P152 billion," Camacho said. "This would result in a net stranded cost of 30 centavos per kwh instead of the current 80 centavos."

This projected reduction in electricity costs is so much pie in the sky as far as the bill's opponents are concerned.

The President has given the bill a populist flavor.

She claims it is a pro-poor measure because it would lower electricity costs, stimulate industry, create jobs and expand the economy.

From this perspective, the bill is not a direct reform for equity. It basically works on the principle of trickle down effect for the poor.

Ms Macapagal would be performing a political miracle if she gets Congress to pass the bill. If she does, her chances of pushing a reform agenda in the next Congress will be enhanced. But leadership is about taking risks. She is a risk-taker.

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OPINION

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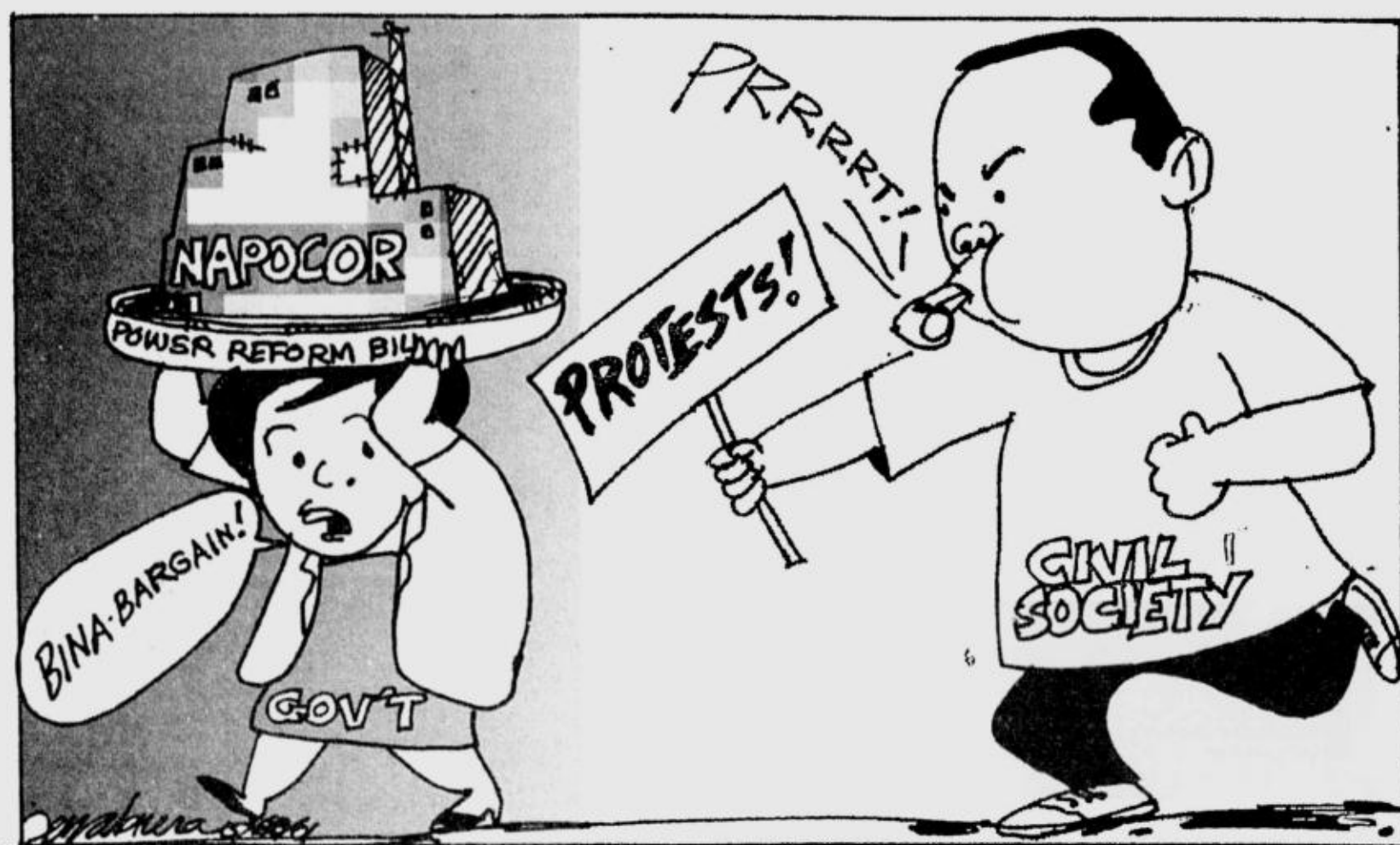
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Gov't deceiving people on power bill

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz



CONGRESS will start today a four-day special session called by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo whose main purpose is to pass the controversial Omnibus Power Bill, also known as the Power Reform Bill, which will authorize the sale of the National Power Corp. to private buyers at a bargain. (See "As I See It," 5/24/01) The President wants so much to have the bill passed that she has embarked on a carrot-and-stick propaganda blitz in media.

As the carrot, she claims that the bill will lower power rates. As the stick, her energy secretary warned that if it is not passed, there will be power shortages in the near future.

Both are lies and deceptions.

This is the truth:

To sweeten the bill, electricity rates will be lowered but in reality the people will have to pay more, including those who don't use electricity. The government will sell Napocor debt-free. It will absorb the \$6.7 billion liabilities of the government power firm and use the taxes paid by all taxpayers to pay for those debts. Thus, while he doesn't realize it, each and every individual taxpayer, whether or not he uses electricity, will pay for the debts that the rich buyers of Napocor should pay.

That is why a businessmen's group issued a statement favoring the Power Reform Bill. They will pay less for the electricity their businesses use while the people pay more. Besides, the potential buyers of the Napocor are their colleagues.

And there is no guarantee that the power rates will remain low. That was the same ploy used in the privatization of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System. The water rates were low to begin with, but they have already increased while the water supply has decreased. That was the same deception used in the deregulation of the oil industry. Now, as we can see, oil prices are shooting up. Power rates in California, from which our own Power Reform Bill was copied, has already risen 300 percent because of a power shortage.

So Energy Secretary Jose Camacho's warning that there would be a power shortage if the Power Reform Bill would not be passed is not true. On the contrary, there will be a shortage if it is passed, as has been shown in California.

The bill will create a cartel of private power generators and distributors who can create a power shortage and manipulate prices like what the present oil cartel is doing. That is what the American power companies are doing in California, and that is what they will do here. Some of the potential bidders for Napocor are the same power companies. That is why the International Monetary Fund and World Bank are bribing the Macapagal administration with loans in exchange for selling Napocor at a bargain.

The IMF, WB and Asian Development Bank are dangling a total of \$900 million in loans to the Filipinos in exchange for the Power Reform Bill. That's a lot of money, and that is why the hands of the Macapagal administration are itching.

But the taxpayers will assume \$6.7 billion in Napocor debts. So that \$900-million loan won't even be enough to pay for those debts. What's more, we will have to pay back that \$900-million loan, with interest. The expected sale price of the Napocor is only \$4.5 billion—also not enough to pay its liabilities. This is the first time that an operating corporation will be sold with the seller shelling out more to pay for its debts.

The whole deal stinks, and anybody who enters into this deal that is grossly disadvantageous to the government should be prosecuted for graft and corruption. Including the senators and congressmen who will authorize such a deal.

Contrary to what Camacho claimed, we have an oversupply of electricity. Napocor and the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) are generating 25 percent more electricity than what we need and actually consume. But Napocor is paying even for the 25 percent that is not consumed—in fact, not even generated. Yes, even when the IPP generators are not operating,

Napocor pays for the electricity it could generate at full capacity. In other words, the IPPs are paid for doing nothing.

Unbelievable? You better believe it. The contracts signed by former President Ramos with the IPPs made that possible. Those are contracts that are grossly disadvantageous to the government for which the signers should be prosecuted under the law.

That is why Napocor started losing money and incurred gargantuan debts. It was making a profit before the advent of the IPPs. It made a profit of P3.6 billion in the last year before the IPPs. It paid for power not generated, not needed and not used and therefore not paid for by consumers.

If the taxpayers will pay for Napocor's debts, it can be a profitable corporation again. So why pay them and then sell Napocor to rich buyers minus the debts? The already rich private buyers will reap all the profits while the taxpayers pay for the debts. If the taxpayers will shoulder Napocor's debts, why not retain it instead of giving it away to others?

If Napocor has to be privatized, then let the buyers absorb its debts. When the MWSS was privatized, the buyers absorbed its liabilities. Now that Napocor will be privatized, the buyers won't absorb its debts. It will be the taxpayers who will. Why are the privatization policies being changed to favor the buyers of Napocor?

All these information are being hidden from the people, who will foot the bill, while the government fills the air with deceptive propaganda. For greater transparency, there should be open, honest, complete debates on the subject. Not many of the members of Congress who will vote on the bill know its full meaning and what it will do to the people. They will be betraying the people they represent if they pass the bill without further study and changes. The people will get even with them in the next elections.

As for the President, I have said it before and I will say it again: That bill is a time bomb that can only blow up in your face. Don't make the people angrier. You escaped by the skin of your teeth in the May 1 attack on Malacañang. You may not be as lucky the next time.

Winds of change

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



the plan to send back the inmates of the National Center for Mental Health to their places of origin to privatize the hospital—and losing all subsidies to food production. So what?

Now, Bayan Muna and the FDC warn that the Omnibus Power Bill will alienate the poor, and it takes on the proportions of a biblical writing on the wall. Now, the veterans of Edsa II warn that the bill will add a new burden on the poor, and it resonates with an apocalyptic threat. Now, NGOs and POs warn that the poor will not take this sitting down, and it takes on the very literal image of a throng rioting in the streets.

This is not without monumental irony, another proof that this country is a magic-realist one. It was the NGOs and POs who were the fiercest critics of "Edsa III," seeing in it only an aberrant and atavistic show of support for a thief, and not also a cry of pain and anger by the poor. It was the veterans of Edsa II who were the bitterest opponents of "Edsa III," finding in it only a parody of the real Edsa, if not indeed a betrayal of its principles. It was Bayan Muna and FDC that were among the angriest protesters against "Edsa III," calling for vigorous public counterdemonstrations against it. Yet they are all, in a dazzling twist of fate, the biggest beneficiaries of "Edsa III."

Without "Edsa III," none of their calls for Ms Macapagal to heed the cries of the poor, none of their warnings that the passage of the Omnibus Power Bill will alienate the poor, and none of their threats to raise public protest against Ms Macapagal should she push through with it, would carry the weight they do. Edsa II alone would not have done it. On the contrary, Edsa II alone would have given Ms Macapagal the mandate to do as Cory Aquino did in 1986: agree with the foreign banks to make debt payments the No. 1 priority of this country, agree with the IMF and World Bank to scrap all subsidies and put all economic activity at the mercy of market forces, agree with the multinationals to raise oil prices and privatize government

companies like Napocor. Probably more so since Ms Macapagal's sympathies lie with the business community. Ms Macapagal's heart and soul belong to globalization.

But "Edsa III" happened, and suddenly Ms Macapagal has become tremendously vulnerable to the slightest suggestion that she is anti-poor. "Edsa III" happened, and suddenly NGOs and POs are able to push their favorite pro-poor causes with exceptional force.

I should think now is the perfect opportunity for the NGOs and POs to come out and push the "discourse" to a higher level, to spark a public debate over the wisdom of an economic environment that privatizes everything, scraps subsidies and prefers token poverty alleviation measures to direct and aggressive efforts to break the cycle of poverty in this country. An economic environment that is putting the most basic needs beyond the reach of the general public. Alongside the Omnibus Power Bill, we now have the oil companies threatening to raise prices, the private schools threatening to raise tuition and the rice cartel threatening to raise rice prices. That is food, energy and education receding in the distance, like a mirage. Now is the time to bring the gripes of the poor, who are most Filipinos, to the heart of economic decision-making. Now is the time to bring the plight of the poor, who are most Filipinos, to the heart of economic calculation.

You can be sure the nation will listen.

The result of the 1987 elections was not 11-1 in favor of Cory's anointed, it was 10-2. Several letter-writers wrote to correct what I said last Thursday. The losing administration candidates were Bobbit Sanchez and Victor Ziga. The winning opposition candidates were Joseph Estrada and Juan Ponce Enrile. Enrile had lost favor with Cory for trying to overthrow her in late 1986 (he has a history of that). I stand corrected.

My thanks to the letter-writers for their well wishes on my 50th year on earth, which was yesterday. I liked one letter in particular: "I hope you live to be 101. By then you'll have no peer pressure." Cute.

Reminder: I no longer go to the INQUIRER regularly—at most only once a month. Please send your snail mail (as opposed to e-mail) instead to the PRESS office, No. 3 Road 1, Pag-asa, Quezon City.

What price education?

IF we recall right, this was one of the issues raised during the INQUIRER-GMA senatorial debate a couple of weeks ago: What would the candidates do about tuition increases if they were elected senators? Most of them said they would call for a freeze in tuition and take a closer look at the petitions to make sure only the justifiable ones were approved.

EDITORIALS

Though obviously a safe answer, it is not without merit. Not all of the petitions for tuition hikes are unjustifiable. Some are perfectly justifiable. They are needed, as the petitioners themselves point out, to raise the pay of school personnel, particularly the teachers, whom schools are yearly driving away to other occupations. They are needed as well to upgrade facilities, some of which have become decrepit, to meet the needs of a new—and burgeoning—population.

But you know that there is a problem when 452 private schools across the country (106 of them in Metro Manila) and 26 state colleges in Mindanao are all asking for tuition hikes, some as high as 23 percent. Many of them are not known for maintaining high standards, particularly in college. Some of them in fact are well-known diploma mills, which makes their plea for an increase in tuition extremely suspect. First, show you are reasonably dedicated to educating the kids, then petition for a tuition increase. Your perennially low standards cannot be a justification for perennial increases. That is profiting from a crime.

The student organizations that are opposing the tuition hikes and are planning all sorts of protest actions if they should push through have a couple of good reasons for doing so.

The first is that, like oil price hikes, the process by which tuition hikes get to be approved is far from transparent. In the case of tuition, the rule is clear: the Commission for Higher Education requires schools to hold consultations with parents and students before they can raise tuition. This is not done. No process of proposition, negotiation and compromise takes place. The decision is left pretty much to the discretion of the CHED.

The result is that, like oil prices, tuition hikes take on the aspect of an effort by resolutely commercial establishments, which is what many schools have become, to rip off the public. Indeed, to rip off the public in a big way, the extent of the hikes suggesting, like oil price hikes, super profits. The petitions of the schools, of course, carry with them all sorts of financial justification, contained in voluminous papers full of numbers, but without being submitted to rigorous public scrutiny, it only makes them suspect—the handiwork of financial shysters.

The second good reason school organizations have for opposing the hikes is that they will truly hurt the pockets of poor and middle-class parents, who are already sacrificing much to send their kids to school. Alongside a threatened oil price hike and the rising prices of basic commodities, particularly rice, increases in tuition will be crippling. It will deny the people access to some of their most basic needs, which are food, transportation and education.

It was to a great extent the students and their parents who flocked to Edsa to oust Joseph Estrada from the presidency, a clear sign of the blessings of education in this country. The least President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo can do, as the students themselves say, is to repay them in the form of freezing school fees until they can be determined to be justifiable. They have a point.

Lack of education

THE GOVERNMENT may wish to go further and examine the ways by which it might subsidize education. Education is clearly one area that may not be left entirely to market forces. The strength of a country remains its people, and the strength of a people remains the extent to which they are educated. That is what separates a progressive country from a backward one.

Giving deserving private schools all sorts of tax breaks should help, as well indeed as giving them access to soft loans and even grants. The principle here is simple. We allow the cost of education to rise beyond the capacity of most people to afford, we will produce a generation of uneducated fools.

The Philippines is already lagging behind its Asian neighbors (indeed even its Southeast Asian ones) in the field of education. We put education beyond the reach of most Filipinos, who are the poor and middle class, and we can forget about competing with them. In time probably even in the overseas job market.

The speakership fight

I READ the "debate" in this newspaper yesterday among Crispin Remulla, Joseph Estrada's counsel; Jesuit Fr. Jose Magadia, and Bagong Alyansang Makabayan secretary general Teddy Casio. I noted Remulla's spirited insistence that the so-called "Edsa III" was a "spontaneous outburst of emotion" and that while the people who marched to Malacañang last May 1 "never took up arms," President Macapagal did not hesitate "to use arms against stones." Remulla's line is the same argument that Estrada's supporters have been peddling to the *masa*, but this flies in the face of facts.

For one thing, the assault on Malacañang was very organized and well-funded—a truck even hauled big rocks to Mendiola for use by the mob. I studied in that area for 11 years and one can't find rocks like those anywhere there—they had to be transported. Moreover, nuns from the College of the Holy Spirit told me they could see from the third floor of their school soldiers merely firing warning shots into the air to disperse the crowds while the rioters were throwing big rocks at them. The nuns found a number of homemade firearms and other weapons when the 800 or so marchers finally fled the school premises.

There's a lot of speculation this early as to who will bag the House speakership. Sheer number alone would indicate that Lakas has all the chances. At the moment, about 90 Lakas candidates have been proclaimed as winners, whereas the Nationalist People's Coalition has about 45, and the Liberal Party and the LDP have about 20 each. The rest of the members are distributed among the various smaller political groups: Erap's PMP, PDP, Kampi and KBL one each; new regional group Alayon of Cebu five; Promdi three, Reporma, three, Aksyon Demokratiko three, and about 10 independents. At least five congressmen are said to be interested in the post: Jose de Venecia and Prospero Pichay of Lakas, Butch Abad of LP, Carlos Padilla of the reformist LDP faction and NPC's Gilbert Teodoro, Danding Cojuangco's nephew.

Because no group has the majority, the speakership will definitely be decided on the basis of alliances and here many factors come into play. Rep. Noyon Aquino was quoted as saying he'd ask his mother, Cory Aquino, to support Abad's aspiration. The Cojuangco group is pushing for Teodoro. But there's the old saying that in the House only one vote decides the speakership, and that is the President's vote.

The Palace was quoted as saying Ms Macapagal

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



does not want to be dragged into the leadership fights in Congress, but whether she likes it or not, she will be dragged into it. Whom will Ms Macapagal favor? In this regard, outgoing Speaker Sonny Belmonte points out that his party mate, Joe de Venecia, has the edge since he remains close to Ms Macapagal.

Sources say that during the "Edsa III" crisis and the days after, Ms Macapagal and De Venecia were in constant communication, talking on the phone three or four times a day. Two weeks prior to the crisis, De Venecia went to see Iglesia ni Cristo Bishop Eraño Manalo on Ms Macapagal's behalf and in the days following, even while he was campaigning in Pangasinan, he was on the phone with Manalo and his son Eduardo Manalo, as well as with Eddie Villanueva of the Jesus is Lord Movement and Mike Velarde of the El Shaddai. It was De Venecia who arranged the visit of three Cabinet members with Ka Erdie.

From what I have seen over the years, the chemistry between the two leaders who were running mates in the 1998 presidential elections remains good. Ms Macapagal has said she is no magician in the presidency, but in Congress she may need a lot of magic to forge a working coalition from the fractious blocs there, if she is to get crucial legislation passed and conflicts resolved within Congress and in the country. Only the master coalition-forger De Venecia may have the skills needed to do these things.

To be sure there is some resistance to this comebacking Pangasinan politician from groups which are now invoking "new politics" instead of what they call the return of "trapo politics." But with the way the recent elections tarnished so many candidates, there remains a few who are pure enough to invoke new politics. De Venecia is also banking on his House record of getting 228 economic and social reform bills passed, 70 of them on economic recovery.

Sen. John Osmeña's lucky streak seems to be con-

tinuing. A light plane belonging to him and which he normally takes to go to his farm and golf club in Pamplona, Negros Oriental, crashed in Lapu-Lapu City the other day on a test run, without him on board. In the elections, his party, Alayon, appeared to have wrested the leadership from his brother Lito Osmeña's Promdi. The question is, would John's lucky streak continue in his sponsorship of the power bill in the special session that starts today?

Alayon managed to win five of the province's six congressional seats, with the only former public prosecutor Clavel Asas Martinez of Promdi breaking the trend. Among the new Alayon representatives in the House will be a "balikbayan," Nerissa Soon-Ruiz. Alayon also swept many mayoral posts, including the five component cities of Greater Cebu. Among those who won was former House Majority Leader and three-term Eduardo Gullas, who was elected the first mayor of brand-new Talisay City.

But the biggest victory for John Osmeña was the election of his son John-John as Cebu vice governor, beating former Rep. Junie Martinez. Interestingly, Osmeña's candidate for governor, Vice Gov. Fernando Celeste, lost to reelectionist Gov. Pablito Garcia, but even this proved a blessing in disguise since Garcia will be serving his last term, paving the way for John-John to seek the governorship in 2004. With the victory of Alayon, Cebu political pundits are predicting the disintegration of Lito Osmeña's Promdi, especially since John Osmeña is said to have already struck an alliance with Ms Macapagal. Promdi's Governor Garcia is expected to return to Lakas with his people.

Cebu columnist Godofredo Roperos, writing in the Manila Times, noted the interesting and unpredictable mix in his province's politics. He pointed out that pro-administration candidates were routed in most towns in the five districts by the pro-Erap Alayon, and yet the people voted for a Promdi governor and the administration's People Power Coalition swept the entire senatorial lineup, with the exception of independent Noli de Castro. What the sweep tells us is that Cebuans subscribed to the anti-Estrada campaign of the administration on the national level, and no effort from John Osmeña and Eddie Gullas could dissuade them (this doubtless played a role in convincing John to ally with Ms Macapagal). But on the local level, many other factors came into play, such as Lito Osmeña's inability to sustain funding for local candidates, the public service record of Pablito Garcia and the Osmeña-Gullas leadership.

'Elitist' photo

THE BANNER story of the May 20 issue of the INQUIRER reported the voting pattern of the Christian and Muslim residents of Mindanao in the senatorial race. The rest of the front-page news, except for the interview of the President by an editor of Newsweek magazine, was about the recently concluded elections.

Providing the break from black ink was the almost half-page picture of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo opening the Alay sa Kawal golf tournament at the posh Riviera Golf and Country Club in Silang, Cavite.

The photo was meant to be a "feel good" material for a relaxing Sunday. But a reader, Amos Reyes of Brookside Hills, Cainta, Rizal, believes it was the wrong picture at the wrong time.

Reyes wrote: "From my point of view, which is perhaps shared by others, the publishing of the photo of her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and former President Fidel Ramos together with Messrs. Espiritu, Secretary Angelo Reyes and General Villanueva in the front page of your May 20 issue taken during the ceremonial tee-off, although for a good cause, was done in poor taste, offensive and insensitive considering the sentiments of the poor and the chaotic situation now prevailing in our country."

"Golf is a sport of the elite, needs special attire and expensive equipment and to show our leaders all smiling when the country is in a very unstable situation can give the ordinary and poor people a wrong impression. Reminds you of Cesar (sic) playing the harp when Rome was burning."

"I hope the publishers/editors will be more careful and discriminating, depending on the situation. Let us all help heal the gap between the elite and the poor, in all aspects, and the media have their role."

Another reader, who requested anonymity, commented that the photo enhanced the President's association with the country's financial and political elite. It negated her earlier moves to erase her "aristocratic upbringing" image and identify herself with the *masa*.

Worthy cause

According to the editor who handled the May 20 front page, the photo was meant to highlight the efforts of the private sector, in particular, the Alay sa Kawal Foundation, to show its appreciation for the soldiers who risk life and limb in the performance of their duties and responsibilities. Organized in 1986, the foundation gives financial, educational and livelihood assistance to the widows and orphans of soldiers who are killed in action.

The golf tournament that President Macapagal participated in was a fund-raising activity. Prominent businessmen and golf enthusiasts contributed substantial sums of money to be allowed to play against each other for trophies, plaques or ribbons. With no less than the highest official of the land gracing the occasion, there was no dearth in attendance of generous participants.

Whatever remains from those contributions, after the expenses for holding the tournament are deducted, will be used by the foundation to help the widows and orphans to start life anew without their loved ones who gave their lives in the service of the nation.

The Sunday editor does not see anything wrong with the picture of the President swinging a golf club, with other high-ranking officials at the background, to enhance the prestige of an activity held for a worthy cause. It is no different from the President cutting the ceremonial ribbon at the opening of a day care center or a school in a depressed area made possible by private initiative or funds.

The editor explained that the widows and orphans of soldiers killed in action who stand to benefit from the success of the golf tournament are in the same economic situation as the people who the reader thinks will be offended by the photo.

The editor expressed confidence that the reading public will view the subject photo in a positive, rather than negative, light. That they will not see anything wrong with their President engaging in the sports of the elite so the latter can be encouraged to part with some of their wealth for the benefit of the underprivileged members of our society. After all, the rank and file of the Armed Forces come from low-income families.

Besides, the editor concluded, it is good to have a break from gory and depressing photos once in a while. A refreshing picture on one sunny Sunday is not too much to take after six days of not-so-pleasant politically oriented photos.

Different concern

The May 10 issue elicited a different kind of comment from another reader, Moses Tsai of greenrock@pacific.net.ph, who said it is his "daily habit to glance over the headlines before proceeding to the comics section. I am now wondering why the INQUIRER, being such a big publication, would scrimp on including a seven-page colored comics section in your Sunday edition."

"Therefore, I am now thinking of just canceling my Sunday ration of the INQUIRER and replacing it with any paper that has the aforementioned section."

The editor in chief gave a nice laugh when told about this concern. She agreed with the reader that considering the INQUIRER's prominent standing in the community, it is only fitting that it carry an impressive, if not attractive, comics section during weekends.

But, she stressed, financial constraints prevent the newspaper from coming out with this additional entertainment section. With the high cost of newsprint, compounded by the equally high peso-dollar exchange rate, the editorial staff is obliged to cut down on the number of pages and, at the same time, maximize the use of available pages.

The cost of every page added to an edition is multiplied by the number of copies published on a particular day. While it is true the newspaper can recover that cost by increasing its posted price, the INQUIRER would rather limit the number of pages than adjust its price.

The editor in chief also explained that aside from the additional newsprint cost, a colored comics section will give rise to additional expenses in terms of royalties to the international syndicates that distribute popular comics items. That extra cost will have to be recovered through some means somewhere. And the readers may not be enthusiastic about shelling out some more for their copies of the INQUIRER.

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascarido Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

THEY SAID

Unequal treatment

"There is no graver insult to us wives of political prisoners than to see a criminal boss placed under luxurious conditions of house arrest while our husbands suffer the daily indignity of Philippine prisons."

—Imelda Tendencia-Contiente seeking equal treatment for her husband and former President Joseph Estrada

A lot of explaining

"In politics, you spend so much time explaining. I would say one-third of the time you spend conducting public hearings, another one-third to explain why you are proposing measures and the rest spent on trying to convince colleagues to support your position."

—Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr.

Horror for East Timor refugees

DILI—The slightly built girl's ordeal began with a death threat at the age of 13 in one of the squalid refugee camps in the Indonesian half of Timor island.

The couple who took her there to escape the violence in their East Timor homeland in 1999 had gone to bed after dinner to have sex—but then insisted she join in.

"She fought, said no and they said they would kill her," says Bjorg Fredriksen, who works for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in East Timor's capital Dili.

"Whenever she tried to avoid it, they would beat her up so she was sometimes unconscious," she adds, careful to avoid details that might identify the girl who spent more than a year as a sex slave for the couple. "She didn't have the confidence to confide in anybody."

The girl, now 15, is back in Dili but for Fredriksen, who is helping her recover, her ordeal highlights the risks facing East Timor children who are separated from their parents and living in Indonesia.

The girl's parents left her in the care of the couple when they were away on business. They were away late in 1999 when East Timor erupted in violence after most of the voters in the tiny territory voted to end 23 years of often brutal Indonesian rule. Furious Pro-Jakarta militias, bent on revenge and aided by Indonesian soldiers, then embarked on a campaign of terror and destruction, forcing hundreds of thousands across the border.

About 80,000 people are still stuck in West Timor refugee camps, many close to the border

FEATURE

Jonathan Thatcher

in generally miserable conditions and under the control of the pro-Jakarta East Timorese militia who have the open support of elements of Indonesian military and police.

Fredriksen estimates that about 1,200 East Timorese children are living in Indonesia, separated from their immediate families—with up to 500 of them in West Timor. She warns that the violence and stress of life in refugee camps exposes other children to similar dangers. "I'm not saying they are all in this situation," she says, adding that others remain vulnerable.

The latest horror story is the highly publicized case of a 16-year-old East Timorese girl, allegedly kidnapped by a militia leader as a war prize, gang raped and then taken as his "wife." Her plight has been taken up by Kirsty Sword Gusmao, wife of East Timorese independence leader Xanana Gusmao, who is campaigning to free other girls and women trapped in similar conditions in the camps.

There has been almost no international monitoring of the camps since last September when all aid agencies pulled out after a militia mob butchered three foreign UNHCR staff in the refugee center of Atambua and then burned their bodies.

Doing it in the dark

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

ful magnets around and around in circles in the presence of metal wires. There, as the English physicist, Michael Faraday, discovered in 1831, these moving magnets magically induce electrical currents in nearby wires, that can be transmitted and used. He didn't know it at the time, but like a stream of water, an electrical current is really a stream of very small particles, called electrons, flowing at incredible speeds, in metallic conductors like copper and aluminum. Thus, generating electricity boils down to harnessing some other form of energy, like flowing water, expanding steam or blowing wind to move magnets in the presence of metal wires in order to produce useful electrical currents.

The same principle applies when the National Power Corp. burns diesel fuel to boil the water for a steam generator, thus converting chemical energy into electricity. Nuclear reactors are nothing more than water boilers using fission energy. Geothermal energy, in which the driving steam is made for us by the earth itself, works the same way. The Scottish inventor of the modern steam engine, James Watt, is honored for his work by having the basic unit of electrical power named after him. The famous kilowatt is 1,000 watts of electrical power. There are many other ways of generating electricity, including solar power, wind, waves and even the burning of municipal garbage.

Electricity must be used or stored in some other form, as soon as it is made. Luckily, electrical power can be transmitted almost instantaneously (actually, at large fractions of the speed of light), mainly through a transmission network of metal cables, transformers and wires, over very long distances from the generation source. The transmission network covers the archipelago like

a road system. It has everything from superhighways to the smallest *eskinitas*.

But except for the biggest industry consumers, the generating sector never transmits electricity directly to the ultimate users. In the Philippines, electricity is distributed by Meralco and local electric cooperatives, which all buy their electricity in bulk from Napocor and the other generators of electricity, the so-called "Independent Power Producers." The distribution sector operates and maintains the complex infrastructure that actually delivers and meters out electrical power. Each distributor is a local, franchised monopoly, with Meralco the biggest and richest.

A decade ago, the Philippines suffered from a severe electric power crisis, in which the industry could not supply the demand for electricity. The result was debilitating power outages that paralyzed society and immobilized the economy. We chose an expedient, but expensive way out, using the so-called build-operate-transfer paradigm of inducing the private sector, using government guarantees and attractive arrangements, to invest in the infrastructure and facilities needed to produce the electricity. We also borrowed money up to our eyebrows.

Now, the weight of those loans and guarantees, and the ugly side of those arrangements, are coming home to roost.

The Omnibus Power Bill seeks to reorganize and rationalize the three sectors of generation, transmission and distribution, while balancing the demands of social equity against the imperatives of pure economics. Yet few people probably understand it, even among those noisily debating it. As with anything so complex, the devil is in the details. There is big money involved, and therefore big politics. As people power flexes its political muscles to join in the issue, civil society finds itself, puzzlingly, on the same side as Juan Ponce Enrile. That's how complicated the issue is. There will surely be endless debates and protests that generate much heat and very little light. Let's just hope we won't have to do it in the dark, either physically or on the merits.

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Comelec failed the people

I AM writing this protest letter not as a candidate for senator during the May 14, 2001 elections but as a citizen, a registered voter and a taxpayer of the Republic of the Philippines.

All throughout our recent electoral exercise, I watched with restrained disappointment and anger the Commission on Elections' inability to deal with widespread cheating and other illegal practices. This started during the campaign period when we witnessed numerous candidates blatantly violating established rules on the size and placement of posters that should have warranted their outright disqualification. As a matter of fact, a case was filed by Homobono Adaza and a letter was also sent by Kilosbayan chair Jovito R. Salonga pointing to such violations. No action was taken on their complaints.

Next was the practice of vote buying and fraud in the counting and canvassing of votes. This could have justified the immediate arrest and incarceration of violators, given a more watchful and more resolute Comelec.

I have also seen and heard, with exasperation, the puny Comelec response to these serious violations of law that, in sum, passed on to the hapless victims and the helpless public the burden of proving the accusation. Unfortunately our people have yet to see a candidate successfully prosecuted and appropriately punished for electoral crimes which, in the view of many, is endemic to Philippine politics.

Why has the Comelec, the constitutional body mandated to keep democracy alive by ensuring honest, orderly and peaceful elections, not taken a pro-active role in weed-

ing out the unscrupulous elements in Philippine politics before they destroy the electoral process? As a watchdog, it should have used the full extent of its investigative and adjudicative function for this purpose. Instead, the Comelec has passively assumed the role of a cold, insensitive and dispassionate judge in a court of law—which it is not.

There should be a concept in law analogous to judicial notice, where the Comelec on its own, can take notice of what is generally accepted and so apparent in the public eye, and therefore needs no further proof. In fact, it would be ridiculous for the Comelec to require proof of these matters, such as the illegal campaign paraphernalia unlawfully posted by candidates in unauthorized areas all over the country, and the fact that elections have not been fair, honest and orderly. It seems that the Comelec has turned a blind eye to these irregularities, and our people have resigned themselves to these realities, including the infamous *dagdag-bawas*.

I have also heard on radio the report that the delay in the submission of the certificates of canvass from all over the country possibly foreshadows the occurrence of electoral fraud that may escape detection by authorities. If such is the case, why doesn't the Comelec determine beforehand whether the certificates of canvass submitted are fraudulent or have been tampered with? The Comelec must stop its official counting based on certificates of canvass that are precisely suspect and tainted with irregularities.

Everyone else has said that widespread cheating, especially in the counting and canvassing of votes,



cannot be stopped unless we computerize our electoral process. Is this not a clear and alarming admission that widespread cheating continues unabated because we have not yet computerized?

There have also been disturbing reports from respected leaders, including former President Fidel Ramos, National Movement for Free Elections chair Jose Conception, and Senate President Aquilino Pimentel, about large-scale fraud and irregularities in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Our people have the right to a free and credible election, and the Comelec must see to it that this fundamental and sacred right is preserved at all costs. In fact, the solution to the pressing problems besetting our country today begins with the duty of our people to choose their leaders wisely. The Comelec must ensure that this choice is protected throughout the electoral process, if our now fragile democracy is to survive.

Sadly, the Comelec has miserably failed our people.

The Comelec must act decisively now. Can it live up to its task of protecting and preserving our hard-won freedom? Under the leadership of Chair Alfredo Benipayo, I am hopeful that it can.—**PERFECTO R. YASAY JR.**, 19 Sorsogon St., West Avenue, Quezon City



Students call for freeze in tuition

AS the school year is about to start next month, we are reminding President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo about the demands of the youth that have yet to be addressed by her administration. One of the urgent demands is the immediate freezing of tuition increases in private as well as in public universities. We are saddened by the fact that despite our consistent lobbying, "Ate Glo" has yet to issue an executive order or even a policy statement regarding our appeal to stop school administrators from collecting higher matriculation for this school year.

Ate Glo should realize that it would be a major disservice to us and to our parents who pay our school fees if the request of 276 institutions of higher education for tuition increases would be granted. The majority of the students would bear the brunt of exorbitant school fees considering that 106 NCR-based universities,

which constitute the bulk of college population in the country, have already announced increases.

The situation is no better for state-funded universities. We have 329 public higher education institutions scrambling for a meager education budget. This has forced state universities to commercialize their assets originally planned for academic use and to raise their tuition to levels that are almost as high as what private schools charge. That public schools function like any ordinary private university defeats the essence of the public school system and speaks of the low priority the government gives to education.

We do not want our education to be treated like a commodity for which we have to pay a high price. We have to do something to stop students from dropping out of school on account of the cost of education. This is not moving forward or bringing this nation to the 21st century.

If Ate Glo really wishes to prove

her sincerity in helping the poor, one way of doing that is to ensure that their children will get the education they deserve by making it accessible, affordable and relevant. If she wants to depart from former President Joseph Estrada's destructive policies on education, then the way to do so is to make education the No. 1 priority in the national budget.

We are hoping that Ate Glo will make the students happy on the first school opening of her term by issuing an order to stop any tuition increase in universities. If she can consider favorably the request of the ousted president for house arrest, perhaps she also can accommodate the request of the youth who marched at Edsa and Mendiola last January to topple a corrupt leader and paved the way for her assumption of the presidency.—**RAYMOND PALATINO**, 13 San Vicente, SFD, Quezon City

Marines rescued Schilling

THIS pertains to your editorial last April 16, 2001 regarding the rescue of American hostage Jeffrey Schilling from an Abu Sayyaf hideout in Luuk, Sulu, by a small contingent of commandos.

Please be informed that those brave men came from the Philippine Marine Corps, specifically the 63rd Force Reconnaissance Company. May we request that corrections be made in your pre-

vious publications to give credit where it is due: to First Lt. Armando Custodio and his gallant Marines.—**JUANCHO SABBAN**, colonel, Philippine Marine Corps

Rights of indigenous people's protected

PLEASE allow us to give our side on the issues presented in the news item titled, "Lumads protest Bukidnon WB project" last May 3, 2001.

It was claimed by Datu Migketa Victorino L. Saway, a tribal mediator and prosecutor, that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the World Bank-financed Conservation of Priority Protected Areas Project (CPPAP) failed to protect the cultural rights of the indigenous peoples (IPs) at the Mt. Kitanglad Range Natural Park.

We would like to stress that the DENR, the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) and the Kitanglad Integrated NGOs (KIN) have continuously endeavored to uphold the ancestral lands, customary rights and welfare of the IPs at Mt. Kitanglad. Moreover, we vehemently deny that we have neglected our duty to give attention to their ancestral domain claim.

Due to our constant dialogues and consultations with the different tribal groups in the area, some have opted to participate in the Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) Program being implemented by the DENR. The program aims to promote social justice and improve the well-being of upland communities. Seventy-eight people's organizations covering some 3,000 beneficiaries, 99 percent of whom are IPs, are recipients of P29 million worth of non-destructive livelihood projects. Another P19 million is in the pipeline for non-destructive livelihood projects.

We would like to clarify that all projects, new policies and initiatives being implemented in the protected area were discussed and approved during the PAMB meetings of which the representative of the Council of Elders is an active member. The policy of the PAMB regarding the issuance of the visitor's permit was approved by the PAMB. We would like to point out that this policy is in no way a business venture on the part of the government or the PAMB.

We stand by our mandate to protect Mt. Kitanglad and uphold the rights of IPs. We believe that the seven years we have worked together with the stakeholders at Mt. Kitanglad should not be wasted. We are therefore calling all stakeholders to once again join us in our crusade for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development of the Mt. Kitanglad Natural Park.—**FERNANDO P. QUILILAN**, Ceso IV, regional executive director, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Region X, Macabalan, Cagayan de Oro City

Welcome discussion of investment issues

IN HIS May 20 column, "Winning the investor's votes," Antonio T. Carpio ignored the inanities of politics which currently obsess media. Instead, he focused on the economy—what will make investors, local or foreign, sink their money here.

I do not buy some of Carpio's recommendations, but I definitely commend his foray into "forbidden territory." The World Bank and International Monetary Fund, as the supervisors of our economy, are supposed to tell us—our government, in particular—what to do to win investors. Of course, foreign fund managers and global investment rating agencies, such as Moody's and Standard and Poor's pontificate on the matter from time to time. Carpio's initiative is healthy—at least from the Filipino point of view.

Carpio's comment on the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law is significant. It is true that due to the

CARL, agricultural land "is not accepted as collateral by private banks." But what is worse is that the CARL up to this day has remained, by and large, a mere promise to the peasantry and a mere threat to the landed. The result is stagnation in the agricultural sector. The CARL should be either totally enforced or junked soonest.

Carpio wants mandated wage increases based on productivity or income. "Otherwise," he said, "no sane investor will put his money in this country." In other words, he wants the minimum wage law repealed. But the minimum wage is the anchor of all wages. Junk it in a labor-surplus country like ours, and the whole wage structure will collapse. And with it, society itself. Here, the minimum wage is the minimum cost of social stability.

Carpio wants the stranded costs of power passed on to the taxpayers because, if passed on to the consum-

ers, no investors "will locate their factories in the Philippines." Wrong. The solution is to repudiate the stranded costs and persecute those who connived to create them through outright plunder. If the taxpayers are to pay the National Power Corp.'s debts, they should continue to own the Napocor. Why make the Napocor profitable and then deliver it to the private sector?

But I fully support Carpio's view that "(T)he first step in reducing poverty is to provide employment to the poor...job creation...must be at the very top of the Macapagal administration's short list of priorities."

In an excessively PR-driven administration like the incumbent's, Carpio's initiative to raise investment issues on the nation's discussion table is definitely welcome.—**AMADO GAT INCIONG**, Unit 301 Union Square Condominium, 145 15th Avenue, Cubao, QC

Doctors providing alibi for Erap

NOW it's bronchitis and arthritis that keep deposed President Joseph Estrada from returning to his detention bungalow and probably from appearing in court for arraignment. The lawyers have run out of court rules to shield their client from his accusers and are turning to the doctors to provide the alibis. God forbid that they may yet turn to his hairdresser to say he cannot appear for excessive loss of hair from depression (the presidential concern of the month), which can come from extreme anxiety and withdrawal from booze.

It is truly amazing to hear such misgivings about Erap's health now because not too long ago, he was shown shadow-boxing to drive the point that he would rout his enemies.

His lawyers should have stuck to creative legal maneuvers and spared the poor Veterans Memorial Medical Center doctors from appearing like quacks. How will the lawyers' colleagues in the Ivy League law schools feel about this? Asiong Salonga must be turning in his grave since his life story had been portrayed by someone who cannot fight his battles like the man he (Asiong) was.

The honorable thing left for Erap to do is confront his detractors in court promptly and prove them wrong if indeed he is innocent. If he is guilty, he should just take the consequences like a man. To drag the nation into protracted strife is not necessary if he is innocent, and if he is guilty he is only compounding the terrible harm he has already inflicted.—**E.P. DAKANAY JR.**, 43 Baltazar St., Philamlife Village, Pamplona, Las Piñas City

Suspicious of GMA's healing process

WE would like to comment on President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's so-called "healing process" in relation to Joseph Estrada.

It is very alarming that Estrada, a president who was ousted and arrested because of plunder, is presently accorded treatment fit for a visiting dignitary.

All the fuss about Estrada's condition and the construction of more comfortable quarters at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center only indicates that President Macapagal will not pursue the plunder case against him.

We criticize Ms Macapagal's "healing process" as it is her way of reconciling with Estrada and his elite faction to consolidate and protect her hold on power.

Our major gain at Edsa was that we were able to kick out of office a president who was guilty of selling out the national patrimony. We con-

demn the Macapagal regime for the grossly lopsided administration of justice. We will not be a party to Ms Macapagal's healing process which involves granting concessions to Erap.

We demand that Estrada be accorded harsh treatment. He was a president who betrayed and robbed the Filipino people. He should languish in jail while awaiting trial.

We also call on the Filipino people to be vigilant as the handling of this case against Estrada will determine the Macapagal administration's treatment of other similar cases involving high-ranking officials involved in crime. She has yet to prove herself. Her slogans of "new politics and healing process" smell rotten.—**MILLET GOBRIN-MORANTE**, secretary general, Kilusan para sa Pamabansang Demokrasya, 59 Imperial St., Cubao, Quezon City

Elections reduced to numbers game

PLEASE allow me to clarify my public statement on my withdrawal from the senatorial race.

Without being philosophical, let me stress that I did not "concede" defeat as some are wont to interpret it. Withdrawing from the race is not the same as "conceding" defeat. They are two different courses of action.

I withdrew from the race because I wanted no more part of the May 14 elections which to me were a charade and a sham. What we had was a numbers game.

The so-called electoral process was turned into gambling which spawned different combinations such as 9-4, 8-4-1, 13-0 and 0-13, just as in *jueteng*, *masiao*, *lotto*, etc. Block voting became the order of that day, with some radio stations giving out prizes of P5,000 to whoever got the correct combination.

Thus, to withdraw is not to ac-

cept the process. To concede is to acknowledge the process as just and proper and to accept defeat in the end, which I did not do. To me, we did not have an election. Period.

And let me further clarify that while I said that Commission on Elections Chair Alfredo Benipayo is not to blame for what happened and that I continued to respect and have faith in him, I did not exculpate the Comelec as a body.

There are two others I can exempt, Commissioners Borra and Tuazon. I am afraid I cannot say anything about the rest. I prefer to keep mum about them and leave the judgment in the people's hands—not mine.

The game plan was in place way before the Macapagal administration took over. That's the long and short of it.—**MANUEL L. MORATO**, Quezon City

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The WORLD

Islamic world urges US: Stop Israel 'aggression'

DOHA—The Islamic world urged Saturday the United States to take urgent action to halt Israeli "aggression" against the Palestinians, and called on Islamic countries to halt all political contact with Israel, at an emergency ministerial meeting in the Qatari capital on Saturday.

Qatar's emir, as president of the 56-member Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), called on "the American administration and President

George (W.) Bush to intervene urgently" to bring an end to the violence.

"It is not possible to stay silent about the Israeli aggressions... or to accept an unfair policy," said Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, whose country convened the one-day talks on the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation.

"I propose... to work for the holding of an extraordinary meeting of the (UN) Security Council to examine the serious situation in the Palestinian territories," he said.

Sheikh Hamud said an Islamic ministerial committee would tour the capitals of the five major powers in the Security Council and of the European Union.

Also in the opening session, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat slammed what he called the UN's "total impotence" in the face of mounting deaths in the Palestinian territories, pinning the blame on the United States.

"Why is there this total impotence of the Security Council?" asked Arafat.

"Who is imposing this silence in the Security Council... at the expense of our people and our martyrs?" the Palestinian leader asked in implicit criticism of the United States.

Arafat vowed that the intifada, or uprising against Israel, would continue "until the Palestinian flag is hoisted in Jerusalem." **AFP**



AN ISRAELI police officer stands near the wreckage of a car bomb which exploded in downtown Jerusalem May 27. It was the second car bomb blast to hit Jerusalem in nine hours. **REUTERS**

BOMB BLAST

'We won't beat them and they won't beat us'

JERUSALEM—A car bomb went off in downtown Jerusalem Sunday, just nine hours and 100 meters from the place where another explosives-filled vehicle rocked the city. No serious injuries were reported in either blast.

The latest explosion went off at 9 a.m. Sunday, near the Russian Compound area, where the Jerusalem police headquarters and magistrates court are located.

Police say the bomb was made up of mortar shells, nails and bullets, the first time such explosives have been used in a car bomb attack. A mortar shell from the car flew into a nearby public square, where police sappers rushed to disarm it.

Police said 16 people were lightly injured, most of them suffering from shock. Jerusalem police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby said two or three people were lightly injured by flying glass.

The street, normally crowded at that hour, was relatively empty because Sunday is the eve of the Jewish holiday of Shavuot, and many people were on a weekend vacation.

Yoram Lieberman, 47, was standing in the doorway of his shop a block away when the bomb went off. "We realized immediately it was a car bomb," he said. "After the big boom, there were five more explosions."

Police raced to the scene and closed off the area as fire fighters put out the blazing car. Jerusalem police commander Mickey Levy said there were other explosives in the area. He and Jerusalem mayor Ehud Olmert went on Israel radio to appeal to residents to stay away.

Israel has been hit with a wave of bomb attacks by Palestinian militants throughout eight months of Palestinian-Israeli fighting.

Many of the bombs have been aimed at cities near the West Bank, like Hadera, Netanya and Kfar Saba. Several have hit Jerusalem. Olmert told Israel radio that it appeared that Jerusalem has become a "special target" of the militants.

Lieberman was not optimistic. "I know we are in big trouble," he said. "They (Palestinians) will not beat us and we will not beat them. Each side will suffer and count its dead."

Just after midnight, a powerful car bomb exploded just up a hill, near the entrance to the police headquarters and a block away from a popular entertainment district, where hundreds of young people were partying in discos and bars. No one was seriously injured.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a militant group, said in a statement faxed to news organizations that it was targeting a police station to avenge the deaths of "Palestinian martyrs." **AP**

9 ordered held in hall collapse

JERUSALEM—Nine people arrested in connection with the collapse of a wedding banquet hall were ordered held for several more days amid suspicion that faulty construction and renovation work were responsible for the cave-in.

The nine, who include the building's owners, contractors and their associates, made their first court appearance Saturday night, hours after rescue workers called off the search for survivors.

The hearing, which lasted over 2 1/2 hours, was disrupted at the end by a car bomb that exploded in a parking lot near the Jerusalem magistrates' court. No one was seriously injured. The radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine claimed responsibility.

Despite the disturbance, the judge ordered seven of the nine held until Thursday. Two people suspected of having tried to obstruct the investigation were ordered held until Tuesday.

The top floor of the Versailles wedding hall buckled Thursday night, sending hundreds of Assi and Keren Sror's 600 wedding guests plunging three stories into a pit of concrete slabs and twisted metal.

Uri Sheetreel, Jerusalem's municipal engineer, said the city will examine all of its public buildings to ensure they have been constructed properly.

"We will determine which buildings are up to standard and those that are not will be closed immediately," Sheetreel told Israel radio.

After picking through the ruins for 42 hours, rescue crews called off the search for survivors and held a memorial service at the site, despite conflicting claims about whether all employees attending to the guests were accounted for.

Twenty-three bodies were pulled out of the ruins on Friday. Of the more than 300 injured, about 150 remained hospitalized Saturday.

More than a dozen were in serious condition. The head of the rescue team, Maj. Gen. Gabi Ofir, said Saturday that after speaking to police he was satisfied that there were no more people in the building. He said the risk of continuing the searches in the unstable ruins was too great. **AP**

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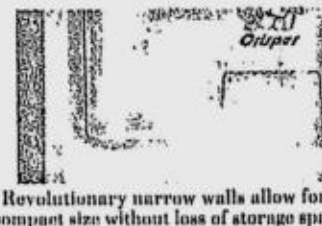
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US, Japan back Kim Jong-il's visit to Seoul

HONOLULU—The United States and Japan told South Korea they would both support a visit to Seoul by North Korean leader Kim Jong-il to help reduce

tensions on the Korean peninsula. While the Bush administration continues to hold off on any resumption of talks with North Korea until it com-

pletes a policy review, Assistant Secretary of State James A. Kelly said on Saturday US policy toward North Korea "cannot possibly exist on its own."

He said its core is in the strong relationship with Japan and South Korea, and he expressed support for South Korean President Kim Dae-jung's efforts at reconciliation. Kim hopes to set up a second summit with the North Korean leader.

Kelly met with Yim Sung-joon, South Korean deputy minister of foreign affairs and trade, and Kunihiro Makita, director general of Japan's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, at a Honolulu hotel in a regular trilateral meeting that focused on the incomplete US policy review.

The three issued a joint statement following their talks, expressing strong support for South Korea's "policy of reconciliation and cooperation with North Korea."

Despite a decision in Seoul earlier this week to abandon plans to celebrate the first anniversary next month of the Pyongyang summit between the North and South Korean leaders, Yim told Kelly and Makita that South Korea fully expects a second summit between the two Kims—this time in Seoul.

"The US and Japanese delegations voiced hope that a second inter-Korean summit would contribute to the expansion of North-South cooperation and exchanges and lead to a substantial reduction of tensions on the Korean Pen-

insula," the joint statement said.

Progress in relations between the two Koreas halted after President George W. Bush suspended US talks with North Korea pending the policy review. The communist North responded by cutting off contacts with South Korea.

Saturday's statement by the United States, Japan and South Korea called for coordination of policies toward North Korea on missiles, weapons of mass destruction and humanitarian affairs.

"In this regard, the three delegations... hope that North Korea would take steps to address the concerns of the international community," the statement said.

In addition, Kelly said at a news conference that North Korea's massive deployment of conventional forces along the demilitarized zone between the two Koreas was part of concerns to be addressed.

"It's not just missiles. It is not just weapons of mass destruction. There are very significant conventional forces that face each other across the demilitarized zone and always have," he said.

He also said these were "manifestations of the same problem on which we wish to work together very carefully."

He declined, however, to specify what issues would be taken up with North Korea when talks resume. AP

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20 hurt after rival white, Asian groups stage riot in London

LONDON—More than 20 people were hurt and 17 arrested during a race riot that turned into an ugly standoff with hundreds of police in northwest England overnight, British police said on Sunday.

Police fought running battles with up to 500 stone and petrol bomb-throwing youths in the streets of Oldham, near Manchester after Saturday night clashes between rival white and Asian groups escalated into a riot in which cars were set on fire, pubs firebombed and gunshots reported.

"They threw quite a lot of petrol bombs," Manchester police Supt. Eric Hewitt told reporters as dawn broke over the rubble-strewn streets and the crowd dispersed. "I am very angry. We could have had someone killed."

He said police were at a loss to explain the sudden eruption of violence, although he accepted that racial tensions had been building for some time.

"We have seen tensions building here for many months, but not on the scale we saw last night. No one can provide an explanation for this at the moment. We will be looking to rebuild confidence in the community."

Hewitt praised his officers for their bravery and said many more arrests were expected in coming days.

He rejected suggestions that tensions in the town had turned some

places into no-go areas for his officers, but said police would maintain a high presence throughout the bank holiday weekend.

Twenty police officers and several civilians suffered minor injuries and a number of police cars were very badly damaged.

"There are fires burning in the streets, there is rubble all over the road and the air's full of smoke," a police spokesperson said earlier after hundreds of riot police from around Greater Manchester were drafted in to quell the fighting.

A Reuters photographer was attacked and his equipment smashed during the height of the rioting, which came just 10 days before a general election that has featured rising crime as a prominent theme.

An eyewitness at the scene described the stand-off between the rioters and the police at the edge of the Glodwick estate, which is home to the town's main Asian community and has been a hotbed of racial tension recently.

"Every couple of minutes they are throwing bricks, rubble and petrol bombs at the police who are about 150 yards away," he said. "Police have been running at them and trying to drive them back. It looks like a road from the troubles in Jerusalem."

Reuters

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Party chiefs vow to pursue Wahid impeachment



INDONESIA Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri, left and President Abdurrahman Wahid preside over a ceremony in Jakarta in this May 21 photo. Wahid's chances of clinging to power dimmed Sunday after leaders of parliament's main parties said they would proceed with his impeachment despite his pleas for a compromise.

JAKARTA—President Abdurrahman Wahid's chances of clinging to power dimmed Sunday after leaders of parliament's main parties said they would pursue his impeachment despite his pleas for compromise and fears that he might declare martial law and dissolve the legislature.

The factional chiefs have flatly rejected a plan by Wahid to surrender most of his power to popular Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri. They said his offer to become a virtual figurehead leader is not enough.

"The political crisis will continue as long as (Wahid) holds onto power," The Jakarta Post quoted one factional leader, Ali Marwan Hanan, as saying after a meeting of top officials from several parties late Saturday.

The 500-member legislature, which has formally censured Wahid twice over allegations of corruption, now seems set on Wednesday to demand that a higher national assembly hold a special session could remove him from office by August.

Wahid, who 18 months ago became Indonesia's first democratically elected president after four decades of dictatorship, has denied any wrongdoing in two multimillion-dollar graft scandals.

Many lawmakers also accuse him of pursuing erratic policies that have worsened the crisis-bound economy and aggravated bloody communal and separatist violence.

Wahid, however, claims the quest to oust him is illegal and is being sponsored by forces linked to the nation's old authoritarian regime who want to end democratic reform.

Sources close to the president said Sunday he had no intention of resigning and would, keeping trying to broker a compromise. They said he was ready to face the humiliation of impeachment rather than abandon his principles.

"He will fight on to the end," said one source, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Tensions in Jakarta are expected to rise this week as the parliament's crucial meeting on Wednesday is scheduled to coincide with a conference of more than a dozen leaders from developing nations.

Wahid is to host the G-15 summit in a convention hall, near the legislature.

Both venues are to be guarded by thousands of police and troops in case of street protests, security chiefs said.

Despite the precautions, the capital was calm on Sunday.

Indonesia's political crisis came to a

head of Friday when Megawati, the daughter of Indonesia's founding leader, Sukarno, refused to accept Wahid's compromise offer, which he maintains is the best way to avoid civil unrest and national disintegration.

Under his plan, Megawati, whose party is the largest bloc in the legislature, would run the government.

Megawati, who rarely speaks to the media, has not publicly commented on the proposal. But her aides say she fears it will breach the constitution that was written by her father when Indonesia declared independence at the end of World War II.

She also has complained that it lacked specific details.

Frustrated by his deputy's refusal to make a deal, Wahid has raised the possibility of declaring a civil emergency to dissolve parliament before Wednesday's session.

Megawati's private secretary Bambang Kesowo on Saturday also accused Wahid of not only threatening to invoke his emergency powers, but also to arrest some of his opponents.

Aides of the president have denied the charge and have repeatedly said that while a martial law declaration remains a possibility, it is an unrealistic option.

AP

Conflict's heavy cost behind Pakistan's nod to talks with India

BY JACK REDDEN

ISLAMABAD—Anemic economic growth and a dearth of foreign investment is forcing Pakistan to look at the heavy cost imposed by a foreign policy mired in its conflict with India.

The spokesman for Pakistan's government, Maj. Gen. Rashid Qureshi, noted a shared need for "economic progress" in welcoming Wednesday's long-sought Indian offer of talks with military ruler General Pervez Musharraf.

While many Pakistanis dismiss the image of a dangerous region as a distortion, few investors will venture into a country where the struggle over Kashmir has ensured nearly 54 years of hostility with giant neighbor India—especially when both have nuclear weapons.

Even Pakistan's involvement in the civil war in neighboring Afghanistan is entwined with the conflict with India.

"A lot of political and geopolitical issues impact on economics," Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz conceded at a May 20 economic conference. "A peaceful environment will help the economy to grow. The issue is an important one; we are very conscious of the issues cannot be divorced."

Aziz was responding after Canadian High Commissioner Perry de Kerckhove had bluntly attacked a "parochial" foreign policy and a wide range of other concerns about the future of Pakistan.

Foreign investment is frightened off. Pakistan had meager foreign direct investment of \$143 million in the last six months of

2000—about a dollar per capita and down \$164 million from the same period a year earlier.

But Pakistan is also diverting its own resources that are desperately needed to fight 60 percent illiteracy and counter economic decay. It has seen the number below the poverty line rise from 18 percent to 34 percent of the population since 1987.

"You have defense spending that you have pared down to four percent of GDP," said de Kerckhove, complimenting Aziz on that progress. "But it is still noted that the PSDP (public sector development program) is only two percent of GDP."

There has been little serious public debate on Pakistan's key foreign issues—Afghanistan, Kashmir and relations with India. These are policy areas dominated more by intelligence departments and the military than diplomats—and they are all intertwined.

While Pakistan denies any military backing for the Taliban movement that controls most of Afghanistan, UN officials say most of an estimated 15,000 foreigners with the headline Islamic organization are from Pakistan.

Taliban military training camps, which the United Nations has demanded be closed on the grounds they are churning out "terrorists," produce a stream of fighters who find their way across Pakistan into the "jihad" struggle in Kashmir.

Islamabad denies it is helping the guerrillas fighting Indian rule in Kashmir but finds few believers when the organizations all have offices in Pakistan.

Reuters

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, May 28, 2001
7th Week of Easter

1st Reading:
Gospel:

Acts 19:1-8
Jn 16:29-33

The disciples said to Jesus, "Now you are speaking plainly and not in veiled language! Now we see that you know all things, even before we question you. Because of this we believe that you came from God."

Jesus answered them, "You say that you believe! The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me."

I have told you all this, so that in me you may have peace. You will have trouble in the world; but, courage! I have overcome the world."

Commentary

The authenticity of the apostles' faith had to be tested. It proved to be fragile, resting simply on the apostles' own resources. But Jesus showed them that he himself could not entrust himself to people's fickleness of commitment. God alone was his security. This was what gave him constancy and consistency in doing his mission despite all the odds. Not even death could budge him from that trust in the Father who was with him. On what does your faith rest?

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Digest by R.B. Vera

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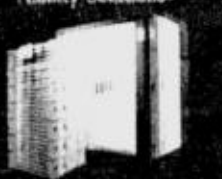
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Macedonia vows to oust rebels

VAKCINCE, Macedonia—Macedonia vowed on Saturday to drive ethnic Albanian guerrillas out of the country after recapturing two northeastern villages and shelling others still in rebel hands.

"The terrorists will be expelled from Macedonia land. There is no question about it," Interior Minister Ljube Boskovski told reporters in Vackince, 30 km northeast of the capital Skopje, which Macedonian forces retake on Friday.

Security forces recaptured Vackince and nearby Lojane from guerrillas after more than three weeks of artillery pounding.

Burned-out houses and buildings holed by artillery shells bore testimony to the fighting.

Fighting meanwhile raged in nearby villages, with the army shelling rebel positions in Slupcane and Lopaje.

But the guerrillas' political leader vowed they would fight on until they could take part in peace talks and realize their demands for change. Leaders of Macedonia's Slav majority, backed by Western governments, have ruled those options out.

"We will stop the war at that moment when we get a guarantee that our demands for complete equality with the Macedonian people will be achieved," Ali Ahmeti told Macedonia's private Al television station in a telephone interview.

In Vackince, reporters saw a sandbagged rebel position in the semi-basement of a half-constructed building. Several old blankets on the floor had served as beds. Old mortars and an ancient rusty machinegun were stored in a corner.

In front of a completely gutted house, flowers blossomed and a greenhouse was intact. There was no sign of civilians.

Success

The capture of Vackince, previously a guerrilla stronghold, and Lojane was the first tangible success for the state security forces in the latest outbreak of violence involving the guerrillas which began early this month.

The rebels launched an insurgency at the beginning of the year, prompting widespread fears of a new Balkan war. They say they are fighting to end discrimination against ethnic Albanians by Macedonia's Slav majority, but government officials and the West have condemned them as terrorists.

Slupcane and Lopaje were shelled by the army in the early morning. Thick fumes of smoke billowed into the skies from Lopaje.

Several hundred meters from Lopaje, the Slav population of Rezhanovce greeted every strike and watched with delight as helicopters struck deep into the mountains.

"Fighting is going on all over the area now, in Slupcane, Orizare, Matejce," a senior ethnic Albanian commander, who uses the nom de guerre Sokoli, told Reuters by telephone.

Army spokesman Blagoja Markovski said a policeman was wounded by a sniper attack on the police station in Matejce.

Another commander of the rebel group, the National Liberation Army, said guerrillas had moved civilians out of Slupcane and a nearby village and wanted the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to help get them to ethnic Albanian-dominated Kosovo.

"If that happens, then we will be in a much more favorable situation to fight," the commander, who goes by the name of Shpati, told Reuters by telephone. "We will continue the war and expand our territory."

Reuters

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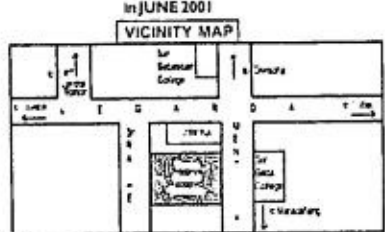
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) major in Educational Management/Psychology/Guidance/Southeast Asian Studies/Science Education/Curriculum and Supervision Management
- Doctor of Philosophy in Mathematics Education
- Doctor of Public Administration
- Doctor of Philosophy in Pharmacy
- Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) major in Psychology and Guidance/Curriculum and Supervision/Educational Management/Science Education
- Master of Arts (M.A.) major in Behavioral Science/Educational Management/Biology/Physical Education/English Language Teaching/English Literature/Southeast Asian Studies/Filipino/Guidance/Family Economics/Library Science/Teaching/Psychology/Educational Technology/Special Education
- Master of Music (M.M.) major in Applied Music/Music Education/Music Science (theory)
- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Master of Arts in Economics
- Master of Public Administration
- Master of Science major in Family Economics (M.S.F.E.) Foods and Nutrition (M.S.F.N.) Biology Chemistry (M.S.Chem.) Pharmacy (M.S.Pharm.) Mathematics Education (M.S.Math Ed.) Social Work (M.S.W.)
- Master of Arts in Science Education

POST SECONDARY TERMINAL COURSES

- Entrepreneurial Management
- Optometric Technicians and General Computer Clinical Course - 1 year
- Dental Technician, Library Technician, Junior Computer Clinical Course, Junior Secretarial Course - 2 years
- Chemical Technology - 3 years
- Tourist Travel Services - 1 year (Malolos)
- Hotel & Restaurant Management - 2 years (Malolos)
- Junior Computer Secretariat - 2 years

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2. Any amount higher than the aforementioned scholarship grant shall be for the account of the depositor.
3. To qualify, the Time Deposit must be locked-in for a 3-year fixed period without pre-termination. In case of pre-termination, the tuition fee paid by the bank and a pre-termination penalty (agreed with the client upon deposit) shall be deducted from the client's Time Deposit Account.
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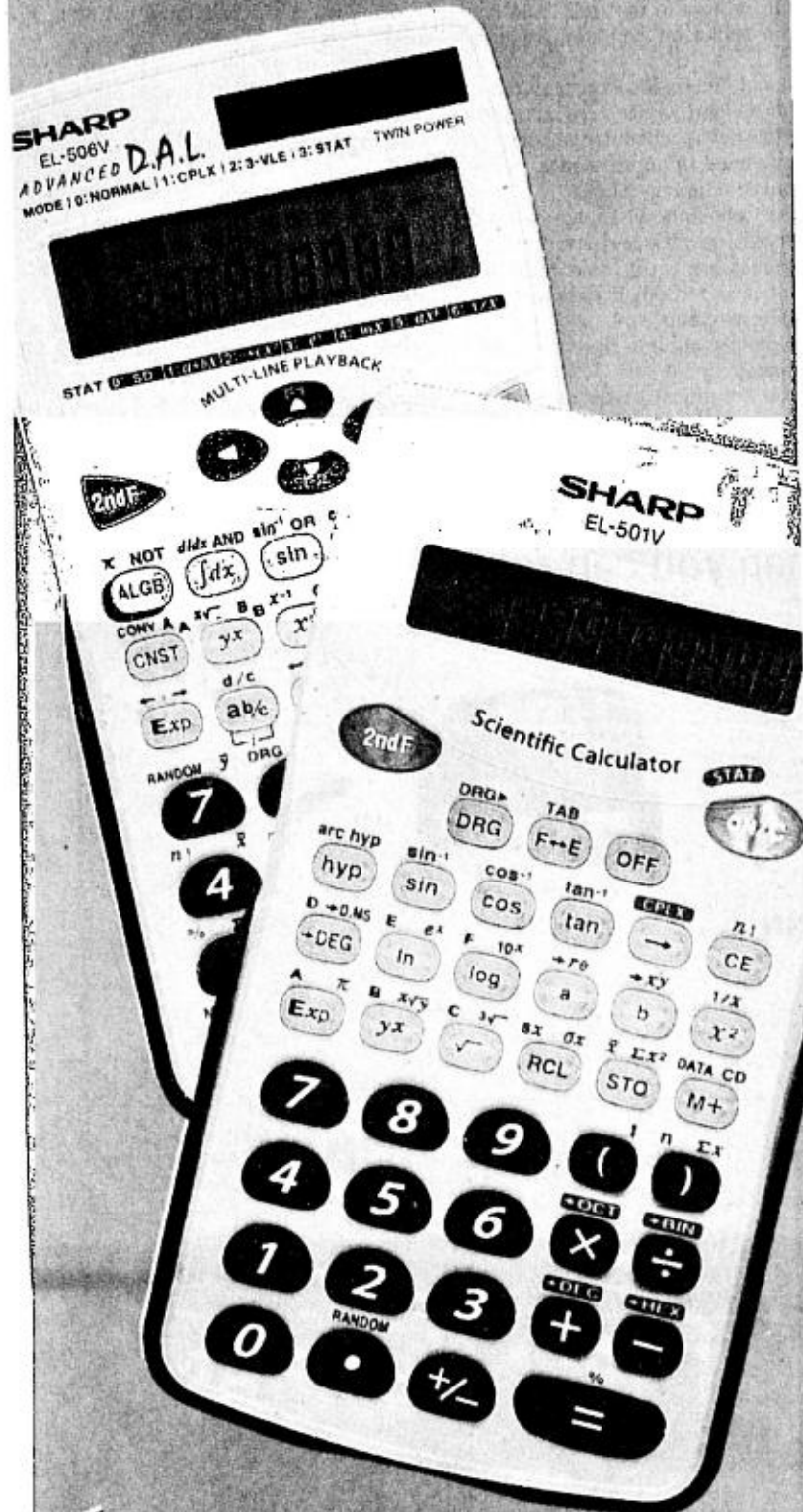
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MAY 28

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PER DTI-NCR PERMIT NO. 0485, SERIES OF 2001

Across the NATION

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

ROUNDUP

'Oplan Balik Escuela'

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Police authorities will implement a plan to secure the different private and government schools before the opening of classes next month. Supt. Mario Yanga, city police chief, said that under "Oplan Balik Escuela," two policemen and a traffic enforcer will be assigned to different private and government schools in the city proper starting June 5. *Jonathan F. Ma, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

13 top farmers

COTABATO CITY—The Department of Agriculture chose 13 farmers, mostly from North Cotabato, as this year's most outstanding in their fields of specialization in Central Mindanao. Sumail Sekak, agriculture regional executive director, said only one of the awards went to Lanao del Norte, whose agricultural and fishery council was picked as the most outstanding. The winners are Justino Jumoray of M'lang, rice category; Carlos Lumogdang of Banisilan, corn; Fred Ycay of Pigawayan, high-value commercial corporation; Macario Pampag of Alamada, large cattle; Ricardo Allado of Banisilan, small livestock; former mayor-farmer Mario Calayco of Pres. Roxas, coconut; Isidro Abrenilla of Midsayap, fish culture; Salapuddin Namla of Pikit, young farmer category; Rolando Valsote of Kabacan, farm family; Ilang-ilang 4-H Club of Kabacan, young farmer organization; and the Rural Improvement Club of Aringay, Kabacan, RIC category. *Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Debts burden DA

NAGA CITY—The Department of Agriculture is burdened with debts, low budget and unpaid wages and incentives for its employees this year, Secretary Leonardo Montemayor revealed recently. Montemayor said the department owed P10 billion in office supplies, construction materials and incentive allowances for its employees. Its budget this year has been cut to P14 billion from the proposed P23 billion. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Diocese golden jubilee

CAPIZ will celebrate the Golden Jubilee of its establishment as a diocese today. Apostolic Nuncio Most Rev. Antonio Franco, will preside and preach during the thanksgiving Mass at the Immaculate Conception Metropolitan Cathedral in Roxas City at 9 a.m. Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal blessed and consecrated the new Cathedral Altar at 4 p.m. yesterday. The preacher for the Mass during the blessing and consecration of the new altar will be the Most Rev. Orlando Quevedo, Archbishop of Cotabato and President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Western Section of Luzon will experience mostly cloudy with SKIES scattered rainshowers and thunderstorm. the rest of country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

 Metro Manila HI 32° Lo 24°	 Baguio HI 22° Lo 16°	 Tuguegarao HI 22° Lo 22°
 Laog HI 32° Lo 24°	 Clark Zone HI 33° Lo 23°	 Tagaytay HI 28° Lo 21°
 Legazpi HI 31° Lo 24°	 Bacolod HI 32° Lo 24°	 Roxas HI 31° Lo 24°
 Cebu HI 31° Lo 24°	 Tacloban HI 31° Lo 23°	 Gen. Santos HI 31° Lo 23°
 Zamboanga HI 33° Lo 24°	 Cagayan de Oro HI 32° Lo 23°	 Davao HI 33° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Chona Galang, PDI Research

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ANTIQUE TURF WAR?

2 killed in NPA-RPA clash

By NESTOR P. BURGOS JR.
AND ODO S. BANDIOLA
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Two New People's Army guerrillas were killed in a clash with members of the breakaway Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA) in Barangay Osorio, Culasi town, Antique, belated reports said.

Killed were Rowena Marie Torroto, 35, a former fishery student of the University of the Philippines-Visayas; and Manny Oberio, 21, alias "Ka Cesar."

Torroto's husband, Eldie Labinghisa, 38, was found by residents in a thickly forested area on May 24, bleeding from wounds in both legs. He was turned over to the detachment of the Army's 12th Infantry Battalion based in Pandan town.

Labinghisa was taken to the Culasi District Hospital and later transferred to the Iloilo Doctors Hospital on May 25. Policemen were guarding his room after he was served an arrest warrant for a rebellion case in Antique.

The clash on May 21 was the first armed confrontation between the rival groups in Antique since the RPA-ABB broke away from the mainstream rebel group in the 1990s over ideological differences.

The RPA-ABB claimed responsibility for the killing yesterday, but said the clash was accidental.

Danile Batoy, alias "Ka Mokong," RPA-ABB leader, told the radio station RGMA-dyRU based in Aklan, that the NPA rebels were resting inside the hut that was actually an RPA-ABB safehouse.

"It only happened that when an RPA-ABB team approached the hut, it sensed armed men inside and opened fire," he said.

Batoy called on NPA leaders in the area for a dialogue so that areas of operation can be defined between them and avoid similar clashes.

The site of the clash and the neighboring towns of Pandan and Sebaste are being disputed by the RPA-ABB and NPA, according to Lt. Col. Lisander Suerte, 12th ID chief.

Labinghisa told the INQUIRER that he and his comrades were asleep inside the hut when they were fired upon by heavily armed men.

"Weng (Torroto), managed to shout, 'Kaaway!' (Enemy!) but was hit while still in her makeshift hammock," Labinghisa said.

They failed to fire back because they were taken by surprise, he said.

Torroto died from bullet wounds in the head and heart. Oberio died of loss of blood from a wound in the leg.

A bullet pierced Labinghisa's left leg and went through the other leg. The rebel said he managed to crawl away from the hut and hide in the forested area.

Labinghisa said residents in the area confirmed that their attackers were RPA-ABB members.

Speakership bid on back seat-JDV
DAGUPAN CITY—Former Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., who won the congressional race in the fourth district of Pangasinan, said his bid for the leadership of the incoming Congress "must take a back seat until the country has calmed down" from the May 14 elections.

Before he filed his certificate of candidacy in February, De Venecia told reporters that he was seeking the House speakership, a position he held during the Ramos administration, to support President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"The President needs a stronger leader in Congress," he had said. Outgoing Rep. Benjamin Lim, now the mayor-elect of Dagupan City, said De Venecia's pursuit of the speakership was the main reason for his giving way to him in the congressional fight.

But De Venecia, in a statement, appealed to "leaders of both the ruling party and the opposition to stop all speculations on the coming fight for the top two posts of Congress so as not to open new wounds."

"The actual legislative leadership elections will be in late July," he said.

Since the May 14 elections had been "very divisive," he said "we should not start talking about the speakership yet." *Yolanda Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



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MAY 29-30	9-5:30	CATERING BUSINESS OPERATION	1,550.00
JUNE 1	9-5:30	SETTING UP A HARDWARE AND CONSTRUCTION SUPPLY STORE	1,550.00
MAY 31-JUNE 1	9-5:30	ADVANCED AND LATEST TRENDS IN FLORAL DESIGN (FLOWER ARRANGEMENT)	1,925.00
JUNE 1-2	9-5:30	MEAT SHOP MANAGEMENT AND MEAT CUTTING (with field trip)	1,386.00
JUNE 2-3	9-5:30	HERBAL BATH SOAP	1,540.00
JUNE 2-3	9-5:30	THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE (SWEDISH STYLE) (NEW)	1,540.00
JUNE 2-3	9-5:30	AROMA CANDLE MAKING (in cooperation with ITDIDOST)	1,540.00
JUNE 4-5	9-5:30	ESTABLISHING AN EXPORT BUSINESS	1,540.00
JUNE 4-5	9-5:30	BOOK BINDING	1,540.00
JUNE 4-5	9-5:30	CURTAINS AND CUSHIONS (ON SITE)	1,540.00
JUNE 4-5	9-5:30	WOOD FRAMING (Bring calculator, cutter, steel tape, and 2 pictures/embroidered cloth or painting for framing (6' x 10'))	1,540.00
JUNE 4-5	9-5:30	COCONUT MINI-OIL MILLING AND REFINING (in cooperation with ITDIDOST) (with field trip)	1,732.50
JUNE 6-7	9-5:30	SEWING	770.00
JUNE 7-8	9-5:30	JEWELRY APPRAISAL AND PAWNSHIP OPERATION (with field trip)	1,540.00
JUNE 7-8	9-5:30	FAST FOOD BUSINESS OPERATION (with field trip)	1,386.00
JUNE 7-8	9-5:30	ORGANIZING PARTY FUNDRAISER AS A BUSINESS	2,310.00
JUNE 8	9-5:30	PERFUMES AND COLOGNES	770.00
JUNE 8	9-5:30	DECORATIVE CANDLE MAKING (in cooperation with ITDIDOST)	1,540.00
JUNE 9-10	9-5:30	REFLEXOLOGY	1,540.00
JUNE 9-11	9-5:30	FRESH FLOWER ARRANGEMENT AND FLOWER BUSINESS	2,310.00

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DATE	TIME	COURSE	DISCOUNTED FEE
JUNE 9-11	9-5:30	LAUNDRY BUSINESS (SMALL-SCALE) (with field trip)	1,732.50
JUNE 11	9-5:30	FRANCHISING A BUSINESS	770.00
JUNE 11 & 13	9-5:30	CATERING BUSINESS OPERATION	1,550.00
JUNE 13-15	9-5:30	FIBERGLASS PRODUCTS MANUFACTURING	2,310.00

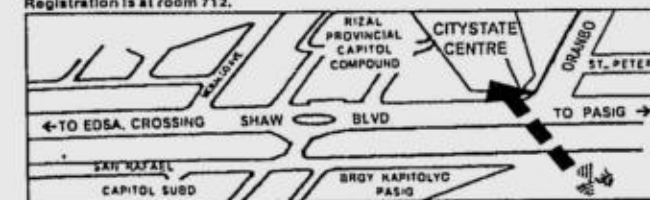
AGRI / AQUA COURSES

DATE	TIME	COURSE	DISCOUNTED FEE
MAY 30-31	9-5:30	GOAT AND SHEEP RAISING (with field trip)	1,386.00
JUNE 1-2	9-5:30	GOAT BREEDING WITH BUYBACK SCHEME (in cooperation with Bio-Research) (with field trip)	1,386.00
JUNE 2-4	9-5:30	TILAPIA CULTURE (with field trip)	1,732.50
JUNE 2-4	9-4:00	MANGO PRODUCTION (WITH IMPROVED FLOWER INDUCTION) AND POSTHARVEST HANDLING AND STORAGE TECHNOLOGY (with field trip)	1,732.50
JUNE 4-6	9-4:00	BROILER PRODUCTION (with field trip)	1,732.50
JUNE 4-6	9-4:00	SWINE PRODUCTION (with field trip)	2,079.00
JUNE 6-7	9-5:30	BREEDING AND CULTURE OF FRESHWATER AQUARIUM FISHES (with field trip)	1,386.00
JUNE 11 & 13	9-5:30	GOAT AND SHEEP RAISING (with field trip)	1,386.00

FOOD COURSES

DATE	TIME	COURSE	DISCOUNTED FEE
MAY 30-31	9-5:30	COCONUT WATER PROCESSING (with field trip)	1,540.00
MAY 30-31	9-5:30	BASIC MEAT PROCESSING	1,540.00
JUNE 2-3	9-5:30	SPECIALTY CAKES AND PASTRIES	1,540.00
JUNE 4-5	9-5:30	SORBITES (Commercial Production) (with field trip)	1,540.00
JUNE 6	9-5:30	FLAVORED AND FORTIFIED JUICE	770.00
JUNE 6-7	9-5:30	YOGHURT (with field trip) (NEW)	2,310.00
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JUNE 9-10	9-5:30	BASIC MEAT PROCESSING	1,540.00

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P400,000 to P499,999.99	Living Room Set
P500,000 and above	TV 32" or more with VCD Player

3. The amount of booked "Easy Loan Gifts to Own Round 2" Housing loan is equivalent to a Home Package which corresponds to certain appliances or furniture sets.
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5. Gifts can be claimed at designated redemption centers.
6. Redemption period is from April 30 to September 30, 2001. Gifts not claimed after the last redemption day will be forfeited in favor of BPI Family Bank with prior DTI approval.
7. Should the client require delivery of appliances/furniture, delivery fees will be charged to the client's account.
8. In case client's gift items are temporarily out of stock, client will be advised by the redemption center as to when specific item will be available or client may choose another item of equivalent value.
9. This offer cannot be combined with other on-going offers of BPI/BPI Family Bank.
10. All employees of the UNIBANK, its subsidiaries, its PR agency (Imago Dimensions Advertising), are disqualified from joining the promo.
11. In the event of lost claim certificate(s), rewards will be forfeited in favor of BPI Family Bank.
12. Prizes are neither transferable nor convertible to cash.
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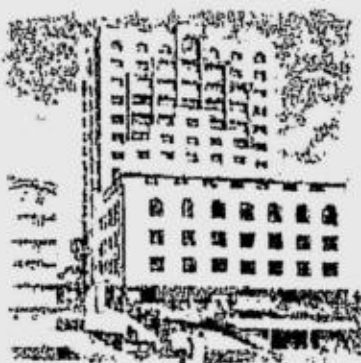


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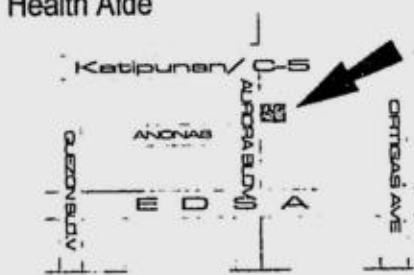
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Vatican names new Bacolod bishop

BACOLOD CITY—The Vatican has formally appointed Bishop Vicente Navarra as bishop of the Diocese of Bacolod after heading the diocese as administrator for five months.

Papal Nuncio Antonio Franco, the Vatican's envoy to the Philippines, on Friday announced Pope John Paul's appointment of Navarra as the new Bishop of Bacolod.

Navarra, 62, the bishop of Kabankalan, has been concurrently serving as papal administrator of the Dio-

cese of Bacolod following the transfer of Bishop Camilo Gregorio to Cebu City in January.

"I am grateful to God that He has given me this opportunity to serve Him and His people in the Diocese of Bacolod," Navarra told the INQUIRER.

He said the Papal Nuncio had called him on Friday to inform him that the Holy Father was appointing him bishop of Bacolod.

He said the nuncio told him: "Be good..."

Navarra, who is from Capiz, was the auxiliary bishop of Capiz from 1979 to 1987. In 1988, he became Bishop of Kabankalan City, also in Negros Occidental.

With his new appointment, two dioceses in Negros Occidental—Kabankalan and San Carlos City—are now in need of bishops.

San Carlos Bishop Nicolas Mondejar has retired, but he has been holding on to the post until a new bishop is appointed.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

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NOTICE OF 72-HR WATER SERVICE INTERRUPTION

Maynilad Water Services Inc. wishes to inform the public that it has scheduled a 72-hour water service interruption-

- From 9:00 p.m. Friday, June 1 to 9:00 p.m. Monday, June 4, 2001
- In the whole of Pasay, Paranaque and Las Pinas Cities and Bacoor, Cavite
- Parts of the cities of Manila, Caloocan, Quezon, Makati including portions of the Makati and Manila East Zone areas.

The water service interruption will pave the way for nine major interconnections and valve insertion projects in the cities of Manila, Pasay, Caloocan and Quezon to be undertaken by the J.V. Angeles Construction Corporation. These projects will mean better water service in the Central and South Business Areas of the West Zone by boosting water pressure and availability in Manila, Pasay, Paranaque, Las Pinas, Muntinlupa and Bacoor, Cavite.

Five of the interconnections, along Claro M. Recto Ave., from Severino Reyes St. to Oroquieta St., Sta. Cruz, Manila, is being done at the request of MRT 2. The interconnections will allow the relocation of an existing watermain from the path of the MRT 2 along Recto Ave., and the interconnection of lateral distribution pipes to the new pipeline.

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Losing candidates reveal tales of misery

BY MA. DIOSA LABISTE
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Defeated candidates used to quietly fade from the public's eye and nurse their wounds in private.

But recent elections revealed a new breed of candidates who openly talked about their hurt. Their stories of betrayals kept the political scene alive even if all winning candidates had been proclaimed.

Ferjanel Biron (LDP), who lost to incumbent Rep. Narciso Monfort (Lakas-NUCD, 4th district), was the first to bare his misery in a news conference on May 20.

In Iloilo City, Vice Mayor and mayoral candidate Guillermo dela Llana blamed his defeat to the

"snakes" in his slate.

Even as he accepted his defeat, Biron, however, lashed out at one person for betraying him, calling him an opportunist and a traitor.

While Biron did not mention a name for the record, reporters said he was referring to Passi City Mayor Jesry Palmares (Lakas-NUCD), whose family is a noted political clan in northern Iloilo.

Biron accused Palmares of not fulfilling his promise of swinging votes from Monfort to Biron on the day of the election. Election results showed Monfort won by 3,729 votes over Biron.

Lemuel Fernandez, Iloilo Press Club president and Biron's "political strategist," said Palmares, in consideration of a certain amount, promised to give

Biron a lead of 10,000 votes over Monfort.

Fernandez and Biron refused to disclose the exact amount, but reports said it was P28 million.

Fernandez said he delivered the cash in six tranches, often brought by a convoy of vehicles. He said Palmares' wife even asked for reimbursement of her husband's campaign expenses amounting to P4 million. These included cows and pigs that were slaughtered to feed people on Election Day and distribution of envelopes containing P300 per voter.

Palmares denied receiving money from Biron. "I don't need his (Biron) money. I am not interested in a single centavo," he said over dyFM Bombo Radyo.

Palmares said "money won't always work" because voters who

took money from one candidate felt no obligation if they voted for another.

He added Biron could always make a comeback in the next elections.

In the city, Dela Llana lambasted his running mate, Victor Facultad, for reneging on his promise to bankroll his candidacy.

"Facultad only gave me P10,000," said Dela Llana.

Their deal, he said, was that Facultad would ride on his popularity while he would have a share of Facultad's resources derived from his sugar holdings.

Their tandem received the blessing of Sen. Franklin Drilon.

But Dela Llana said Facultad "junked" him at the last hour for Rafael Lopez Vito (LP), a longtime ally of Facultad. The latter de-

nied Dela Llana's accusations.

Both Dela Llana and Lopez-Vito lost to lawyer Jerry Treñas (Lakas-NUCD).

Hearing them exchanging barbs over the radio, Drilon recently told them to shut up.

Defeated Lakas-NUCD candidates for city council, Pascual Espinosa III and German Gonzales blamed Iloilo City Mayor Mansueto Malabor for dumping them.

They said Malabor and Rep. Raul Gonzalez instead pushed for the victory of their sons, Mandrie Malabor and Raul Gonzalez Jr., who placed second and fourth.

But there are also some defeated candidates who honorably bowed to the voters' will without rancor.

Among them was Vice Gov.

Demy Sonza, a gubernatorial candidate, who planned to raise funds for non-government organizations, deliver lectures and write a book on the history of Iloilo during the American colonial period when his term expires on June 30.

"On the top of these will be a peaceful life free from the stress of politics," said Sonza, who launched his candidacy in March by launching a book on Ilonggo hero Adriano Hernandez.

Lawyer Rodolfo Legaspi, a defeated candidate for board member representing the first district, immediately resumed writing columns on the maddening world of politics for The Visayas Examiner.

He wrote: "My God! it's good that it's all over, at least for the next two years and a half."

Tommy O declared Cebu City mayor

CEBU CITY—The Board of Canvassers (BOC) proclaimed Tomas "Tommy" Osmeña as mayor-elect of this city about 10 p.m. Saturday even if eight missing election returns were not yet canvassed.

Osmeña, who ran under the Bando Osmeña-Pundok Kauswagan-People Power Coalition, was sitting between his wife Margot and sister, socialite Minnie Osmeña, smiled when his name was called as winner in the mayoral race.

But supporters of incumbent Mayor Alvin Garcia of Kusog were not happy. They threatened to stage "people power" to prevent Osmeña from taking over City Hall.

They questioned the BOC's decision to proclaim Osmeña despite its failure to retrieve eight missing election returns from Barangays Quiot-Pardo, Sawang Calero, Duljo-Fatima, Basak San Nicolas and Guadalupe.

Candy wrappers, plastic bottle caps and plastic wrappers rained on Osmeña and his group as they went down to the first floor of the City Health auditorium.

Policemen tried to shield Osmeña's group as Kusog supporters jeered at them and called them names.

The INQUIRER tried to reach Garcia yesterday for comment. His son, Raymund, said his father would issue a statement later.

Marshall Rubia, BOC chair and Commission on Elections assistant regional director, said Section 33 of the Omnibus Election Code author-



OSMEÑA

ized the board to push through with the proclamation if the total number of votes of the returns would not affect the results.

The total number of votes expected from the eight missing election returns was only 1,458, which were not enough to upset Osmeña's lead over Garcia.

As of Saturday night, Osmeña had 3,060 more votes than Garcia. He had 128,754 votes while Garcia had 125,694.

Rubia said it would take them a few more days to retrieve the election returns, which were reportedly placed by the Board of Election Inspectors inside the ballot boxes being kept at the City Treasurer's Office.

The BOC, he added, made efforts to locate the returns but failed to do so because the person in charge was not around.

Also proclaimed Saturday night were Michael Rama, Osmeña's running-mate, and two former congressmen—Antonio Cuenco of the south district and Raul del Mar of the north district.

Cuenco would replace his wife, Nancy, the incumbent representative, who ran in the 1998 elections after her husband was constitutionally barred from seeking a fourth term.

Del Mar, for his part, would replace his son, Raoul, who took over the congressional post in 1998 after his father had served three consecutive terms. *Rianne C. Tecson with reports from Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Comelec sets special polls in Kalinga town

BAGUIO CITY—Special elections have been scheduled on May 30 in 12 precincts in Pasil, Kalinga, and the results could affect the race for vice governor and local positions, according to the Commission on Elections.

Lawyer Armando Velasco, Comelec director in the Cordillera, said his office was waiting for the en banc decision of the Comelec in Manila before he could proceed with the special elections.

However, the results would not affect the election of Kalinga Rep. Laurence Wacnang for a third term and of Macario Duguang, a former transportation and communications regional director, as governor.

On May 15, armed men took the ballot box of Precinct 5A-2 at the Coop Elementary School in Cagayan in Pasil. The box contained 187 ballots.

Velasco said the armed men fired their guns, causing panic among poll officials and watchers. Earlier, the ballot box of Precinct 5A-3, also in Cagayan, was snatched by armed men. The box was empty and the contents were already tallied and transferred.

On May 17, the Pasil police recovered ballot boxes of Precincts 2A-1 and 2A-3 of Batong Buhay and Balatoc villages.

The ballot boxes were snatched at Balinciagao in Pasil.

Velasco said the recovered ballots could not be counted as

the original contents were probably changed.

The ballot boxes for Precincts 6A-1 and 6A fell in Pasil River and were deemed "irrecoverable" by the provincial Comelec.

Five copies of election returns from Precinct 2A in Poblacion in Lubuagan, Kalinga, were snatched by armed men.

A ballot box was also lost at Sitio Balatoc in Locog, Tabuk, the capital town, forcing the local Comelec to declare a failure of elections there.

In Ilocos Sur, not all proclaimed Vigan City councilors are winners if the motion of an election officer is granted.

Joel Gines has asked the Comelec in Manila to allow him to reconvene the city board of canvassers after it found machine errors in the tally of votes of winners in the race for councilors.

"Hopefully the Comelec en banc would grant my motion so that we could reconvene, make the necessary changes and re-proclaim the winners," he said.

Gines' motion was prompted by protests from supporters of Councilor George Villanueva who claimed their candidate had won.

They claimed that they were surprised when the Comelec proclaimed the winners without Villanueva. *Frank Cimatu and Leoncio Balbin, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Maguindanao canvassing starts

COTABATO CITY—The Maguindanao board of canvassers has resumed work on Friday afternoon after nearly a week of suspended activities due to petitions to annul allegedly fraudulent election results in at least 10 towns.

Clarita Callar, Commission on Elections director for Central Mindanao, said the arrival Friday of Davao Oriental election supervisor Reblane Tambuang to act as Maguindanao board of canvassers vice chair "has ended the delay in the provincial canvassing."

Maguindanao, marred by election-related violence, could hardly come up with the official outcome of the May 14 polls due to allegations of massive fraud and terrorism by various political camps, Callar said.

Some canvassers inhibited themselves because of death threats and intimidation, he added.

Winy Asdala, acting Maguindanao board chair, said the resumption of canvassing only tackled election returns from Pagawan and Talayan, two of the 10 towns where the returns are subject of a petition for annulment due to alleged cheating.

Congressional aspirant Ali Sangki (Kampi) said he has documents to show "glaring poll irregularities in the second district of Maguindanao."

In his May 24 petition to the Comelec, Sangki questioned members of the Board of Election Inspectors (BEI) about the missing "statement of votes per precinct."

He said the brown envelope that the

board submitted to the Provincial Board of Canvassers (PBC) did not have the statement of votes per precinct.

"Besides, I found that these statements did not tally with those reflected in the certificate of canvass."

Former Comelec commissioner Japal Guiani, in a separate petition, asked the poll body to nullify the election results in at least 10 towns due to fraud.

Guiani, who is seeking a congressional seat under the Lakas-NUCD, said his party-mate, reelectionist Gov. Zacaria Candao, has filed a similar complaint asking the Comelec to declare a failure of elections in the towns of Mamasapano, Shariff Aguak, Talitay, Ampatuan, Buluan, South Upi, Talayan, Datu Piang, Pagalungan and Pagagawan. Callar said a Comelec en banc

resolution was issued Friday ordering the PBC to resume canvassing of votes at the Army's 6th Infantry Division headquarters.

The Comelec also directed the PBC "to suspend the proclamation of the winning candidates for the position of Congressman in the second district, governor, vice governor and board members," Callar said.

Candao confirmed the Comelec directive, saying that the Lakas petitions in Maguindanao have been consolidated and "set for hearing with dispatch."

The poll body has yet to fix the date of what Candao expects to be a "full-blown hearing" of the Comelec en banc. **Charlie C. Señase and Nash B. Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau**

Mindanao vote: What was it?

By PATRICIO P. DIAZ

ON MAY 20, the INQUIRER bannered the report of its correspondent Allan A. Nawal on "How Mindanao Voted." Briefly, "Christians for PnM; Muslims for PPC."

The report cited voting in Pagalungan and Parang towns in Maguindanao and in Marawi

City to show how Muslims voted for the People Power Coalition senatorial candidates and quoted Muslims explaining their votes.

In contrast, the report cited the voting in Aleosan, North Cotabato, for Pwersa ng Masa and how reelectionist Emmanuel Piñol won the gubernatorial race against Anthony Dequina. Piñol supported the "all-out war" policy of the Estrada administration against Moro rebels, while Dequina, North Cotabato's first district representative and government peace panel member, called for a stop to the war and a return to the negotiation table.

The report is truthful and objective. While it cited voting in four places and quoted only Muslim voters, the picture covered Mindanao.

Objections

The following day, May 21, the Inquirer carried "Mindanao vote: Not about war or peace," an objection to Nawal's report.

The objection in a nutshell: "The Mindanao vote is not about defining religious lines; neither is it solely about voting for war or peace."

Obviously, the objectors attributed to Nawal's report biases not in the story at all.

The objectors are all "concerned leaders from Mindanao (who) appealed to the INQUIRER to be more sensitive in presenting analysis on the outcome of elections on the island." The Nawal report was not an analysis but an objective report.

Fanning biases

Bacon Macaraya, chair of the Marawi-based Ranao Center for Peace and Development, interpreted the report as "analyzing the vote based on Muslim-Christian dynamics" and warned this "would only fan the biases and animosity long held by both Moros and settlers against each other."

The INQUIRER quoted her: "It is bad enough that this animosity reigns in the hearts of our people. It's bad enough that the all-out war policy of the previous administration fanned the animosity. Definitely, it's worse if we highlighted Christian-Muslim divisions in our assessment of the Mindanao vote."

Macaraya is right as regards the existence of animosity between the Muslims and the Christians. But, reporting the truth about how the voting went in Mindanao is not highlighting "Christian-Muslim divisions."

Divided by faith

Irene Santiago, peace advocate and government panel member in the ongoing peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, saw the Nawal report as saying "that the votes in Mindanao have been divided based on Muslim and Christian faiths."

Santiago's view is fallacious. Neither the Muslim nor Christian vote is an act of faith. Nawal's Muslim interviewees and Mayor Franklin Quijano of Iligan City, where the PnM senatorial candidates won 13-0, were categorical about the Muslim and Christian votes as the contrasting reactions to the all-out war.

Felix Irag, secretary general of the Kilusang Mayo Uno in Southern Mindanao, corroborated Santiago by saying "it was wrong to interpret the voting trend on the island along religious lines." Like Santiago's, his view is also fallacious.

Reality

The Nawal report brought out the reality that the PnM senatorial candidates won in Christian-dominated areas in Mindanao, showing the Christians' appreciation for then President Joseph Estrada's all-out war against the MILF.

Winning reelectionist Mayor Quijano and Rep. Alipio Badelles, both of Iligan, said the people remembered how Estrada came all the way from Manila to be with the people of Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte, when it was attacked by the MILF.

The PnM and other pro-Estrada candidates in predominantly Christian provinces within the area of autonomy, as well as outside of it, must have fanned the Christians' fear of the MILF and the Moro National Liberation Front to make them reject the pro-administration candidates.

President Macapagal-Arroyo was portrayed as pro-Muslim or

pro-MILF when she ordered the return of MILF rebels and their families to "Muslim communities" within the MILF camps, among them Camp Abubakar.

In the first district of South Cotabato, including General Santos City, congressional candidate Darlene

Antonino-

Custodio in-

cluded the anti-

MILF line in her

campaign. A PnM candidate, she won.

Comebacking Rosalita T. Nuñez of General Santos City and Rosario P. Diaz of the first district of North Cotabato lost in their mayoral and congressional bids, respectively. The voters must have not forgotten their pro-MNLF stand in the 1996 SPCPD (Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development) controversy.

On the other hand, the Nawal report brought out a contrasting reality that the PnM senatorial candidates, except two Muslims, lost in predominantly Muslim provinces and cities as the Muslims' condemnation of the all-out war.

To punish the MILF, the war punished the non-MILF Muslims more.

It doesn't matter that Estrada was no longer around to resume the war. But the wounds are still fresh; the sufferings are not over. The PnM candidates of Estrada stoked anew the smoldering feelings of oppression, discrimination and injustice, and for vengeance.

Stretching out

That the Muslims voted for the PPC and the Christians for the PnM because of the all-out war against the MILF is a fact Mindanao and Manila have to face. That much the Nawal report stated. Attributing to it divisiveness is stretching the fact.

Muslim-Christian biases and animosity due to socioeconomic and religious differences have always been there. It was Estrada's all-out war policy, which stoked these flames. The May 14 vote only showed concretely how the Muslims and Christians stood divided. The Nawal report put the divide in print for all to see.

In protesting, do Bacon Macaraya, Irene Santiago, Felix Irag and others of the same persuasion want to hide the fact of the Mindanao vote? Hiding the mirror will not remove the wounds and scars in our face as a people.

Implications

Fr. Eduardo Martinez, president of the Ateneo de Davao University, sees in the PnM vote "the people's (Christians') disagreement with the government's policy of appeasement on the Moro problem" and their preference for a "stronger position."

Edgar Ramirez, executive director of the Center for Policy Advocacy and Strategic Studies of Notre Dame University in Cotabato City, sees in the PnM vote "very strong" anti-Muslim sentiment in the Christian areas.

In the ultimate analysis, the anti-war reaction expressed by the Muslims in their PPC vote is also a "very strong" anti-Christian sentiment since the Christians rooted for the all-out-war policy of Estrada's Christian government.

Imperative

We cannot hide the fact and imperative of the Mindanao vote. The all-out war of the Estrada administration had put to waste the many years of patient work by peace advocates to close the Muslim-Christian divide. That is a fact.

The imperative is to close the divide widened by the Muslim resentment over the all-out war which most Christians in Mindanao, except the peace advocates, cheered mindless of the devastation and displacement in Muslim communities.

We cannot deny the disagreement by many Christians with the new government's policy of appeasement and their preference for the policy of confrontation.

Neither can we ignore the prevailing anti-Muslim and anti-Christian sentiments.

All these have to be factored into realistic policies and programs focused on the Muslim-Christian divide. To be realistic, the policies and programs should consider distinctly the essential differences of Muslim and Christian problems and start with Muslims in Muslim Mindanao.

The Mindanao vote, as reported by Nawal, is a revelation and a call for President Macapagal-Arroyo to rethink seriously her Mindanao policy.

Patricio P. Diaz is a former editor of the Cotabato City-based Mindanao Cross and former professor of the Notre Dame University.

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AN OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

Dear President Arroyo,

Like yourself, Madam President, we from the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC) would like to see the problems of the National Power Corporation (NPC) and the power industry resolved and the high cost of electricity lowered. But we do not see how the passage of Electric Power Industry Reform Bill can do these.

Over nationwide TV, you personally guaranteed that the power bill would produce lower electricity rates. This is a promise we will not forget. But pray, tell us, where in the Bicameral or in the Executive version of the bill is the guarantee that electricity prices will fall?

1. The onerous IPP contracts shall continue to be honored and the resulting high electricity rates shall continue to burden consumers and taxpayers- NPC is bleeding because of onerous contracts entered into with Independent Power Producers. Passing the power reform bill is tantamount to clearing the contracts of fraud and irregularity. IPP contracts must first be reviewed and renegotiated BEFORE restructuring the energy industry. As long as government honors these contracts, power rates will not fall.
2. Consumer benefit from the mandated 30¢ reduction of electricity prices is illusory- The 30¢ reduction will be possible only because the National Government will absorb PhP200B of NPC's bad debts. So while 30¢ will disappear from our electric bills, we will still pay it as taxpayers. To add to the illusion, for every kWh we consume, we will continue to be charged at least one peso to pay for onerous IPP contracts. So the 30¢ reduction is a joke. But the joke's on us and we are not laughing.
3. Monopoly ownership will be perpetuated and even strengthened- The market competition which will be supposedly introduced will not occur. The bill allows cross-ownership even though it is expected to result to a monopolistic industry structure. The bill is being fashioned to pave the way for an industry dominated by 3-4 players similar to the present oligopolistic oil industry.

Passing the bill now entails a heavy price, and that heavy price will be borne by the people—not the greedy IPPs, not the elite family businesses, not even the government, but the people.

In the end, you will have to answer only one question: Will your government's perceived desperate need for money from the IMF and the ADB compel you to succumb to the shameless greed of Independent Power Producers and private utilities, denying us a just and lasting solution to the problems of the power sector?

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Power off on May 30 at 8:30 pm
Scrap NPC Privatization Bill!
No to PPA and onerous IPP contracts!
People Power v. Power Bill!

Express your protest against PPA and the passage of the power bill by turning off your lights for 10 minutes on May 30, 8:30 pm.

Tourism fallout expected after resort raids

(From page A1)

France Presse, however, Gordon said no less than World Tourism Organization president Francesco Frangiali had warned that the country would "irretrievably" lose its image as a tourist destination unless the adverse perception of security were reversed.

Authorities have yet to agree on whether Abu Sayyaf bandits were behind the attack on the Dos Palmas resort off Palawan early Sunday or the raid on the Pearl Farm resort off Davao City on Tuesday.

"Well, it doesn't really matter whether they are Abu Sayyaf (members). All that matters to me right now is that we try to keep the tourists safe and the military is undergoing a pursuit operation," Gordon told local television.

According to him, President Macapagal-Arroyo has been closely monitoring the situation.

"She knows about the speculative possibilities involved in this thing that could hurt not only tourism but our trade," he said.

The country's \$2.5-billion tourism industry has been hit hard not only by crime but also by the political crisis.

Tourist arrivals fell 4.8 percent to 1.8 million last year and have slowed down further this year, according to officials.

Terrorist bombings hit Manila last December at the height of then President Joseph Estrada's impeachment trial on corruption charges.

In January, Edsa People Power II toppled Estrada and swept then

Vice President Macapagal-Arroyo to power. Four months later, deadly riots erupted outside Malacañang on May 1, sparked by the deposed leader's arrest ahead of his Sandiganbayan trial next month.

Neighboring Southeast Asian nations are enjoying higher tourist arrivals and are spending a great deal more on promotion budgets.

The Philippine government spent \$660,000 on tourist promotion in 2000 when 1.8 million tourists visited the country.

"Anything can hurt tourism at the moment. But my point here is, we don't have to tell everybody that we are not in good shape here," Gordon said on television.

"We have 7,100 islands in this country. We don't have to advertise to the whole world that all the

7,100 islands are not safe. There are two islands that have been affected by these abductions, and the quicker we are able to handle it, the better we'll be in the future," he added.

Gen. Diomedio Villanueva, Armed Forces chief of staff, said the Philippines remained "by and large really safe."

"These things can happen even in the United States or in other countries, even in Europe," he added.

Latest headache

The raid on the Dos Palmas resort is but the latest headache for the ill-equipped military, already burdened with two raging insurgencies, widespread crime and frequent coup rumors.

It's also yet another hurdle in President Macapagal's seemingly

unending baptism of fire.

The military was still helping guard the slow vote count from May 14 elections, considered one of the bloodiest in recent years, when news of Sunday's abductions broke out.

"They seem to have taken advantage of the fact that police and military forces have been deployed to ensure that election-related violence will be reduced and to ensure that votes are properly counted," presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said.

After last year's kidnappings, the military launched a massive offensive to wipe out the Abu Sayyaf and periodically declared the group was crippled beyond recovery.

But military officials said the self-styled Moro rebels might have

used the recent elections to rebuild and regroup.

Reminders of Mindanao's volatility abound.

In the latest episodes, armed men seized a ferry carrying 42 people off Basilan on Thursday.

They later released the passengers but kept four sailors in apparent revenge against a local militia, the military said. Police said the abductors were likely Abu Sayyaf members.

The Abu Sayyaf snatched 24 people, mostly foreigners, from two Malaysian resorts near Borneo and brought them to Jolo in April last year.

Many of the hostages were ransomed off for millions of dollars while the others were rescued. Reports from AFP and AP

Drama unfolds: Can Recto hang on to victory?

(From page A1)

"It's unlikely that he (Recto) won't have votes in Mindanao," Limcaoco said.

But the opposition's Puwersa ng Masa (PnM) maintains that votes from Mindanao, which it considers its bailiwick, will boost the chances of its candidates.

Comelec Chair Alfredo Benipayo, head of the National Board of Canvassers (NBC), said on Saturday that the NBC would proclaim the top eight senatorial candidates either today or tomorrow.

But PnM lawyers are expected to oppose this since they expect their candidates at the tail end of the Magic 13 to climb once the votes from PnM bailiwicks are counted.

As of 5:30 p.m. on Saturday and with 87 COCs counted, eight PPC candidates and four from the PnM were in the Magic 13. Independent Noli de Castro was leading the pack with over 13 million votes.

At the resumption of the canvassing today, people expect movements in the 10th to 13th positions.

Former police chief Panfilo Lacson is hanging on to 10th place with only a 13,259-vote advantage over former first lady Loi Ejercito, who, in turn, has only an 18,464 lead over reelectionist Sen. Gregorio Honasan.

Recto needs to catch up with Honasan by 214,185 votes, but is in danger of being yanked out of the Magic 13 by Enrile, who is betting on PnM bailiwicks in Mindanao to give him at least half a million votes to overtake Recto.

The NBC is still awaiting the arrival of COCs from 12 cities and provinces where local-level canvassing had been slowed by violence, protests and the sheer number of voters.

Based on the 1998 Computerized Voters List, which the Comelec used for the May 14 elections, these areas have close to eight million registered voters.

Heavy turnout

Because the poll body had placed the voters' turnout at 85 percent, some six to seven million votes are expected to be counted in the closing days of the canvass.

The COCs yet to be canvassed are from Quezon City (1,065,902 registered voters), Caloocan City (517,803), Pateros (29,128), Taguig (206,842), Nueva Ecija (774,438), Cebu (1,524,906), Cebu City (386,968), Eastern Samar (164,476), Leyte (701,354), Cagayan de Oro City (222,462), Lanao del Norte (334,682), Lanao del Sur (260,108), Maguindanao (320,767), and Tawi-Tawi (99,764).

The COCs from vote-rich Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao, however, are expected to be canvassed last since the local canvassing has just started over the weekend due to the volatile peace and order situation.

The COCs from Sultan Kudarat (232,054 registered voters), Zamboanga del Norte (371,090) and Batangas (894,120), had already arrived at the Philippine International Convention Center last week. But the NBC has put them on hold pending the resolution of protests filed by PnM lawyers, who discovered alleged discrepancies that favored Recto.

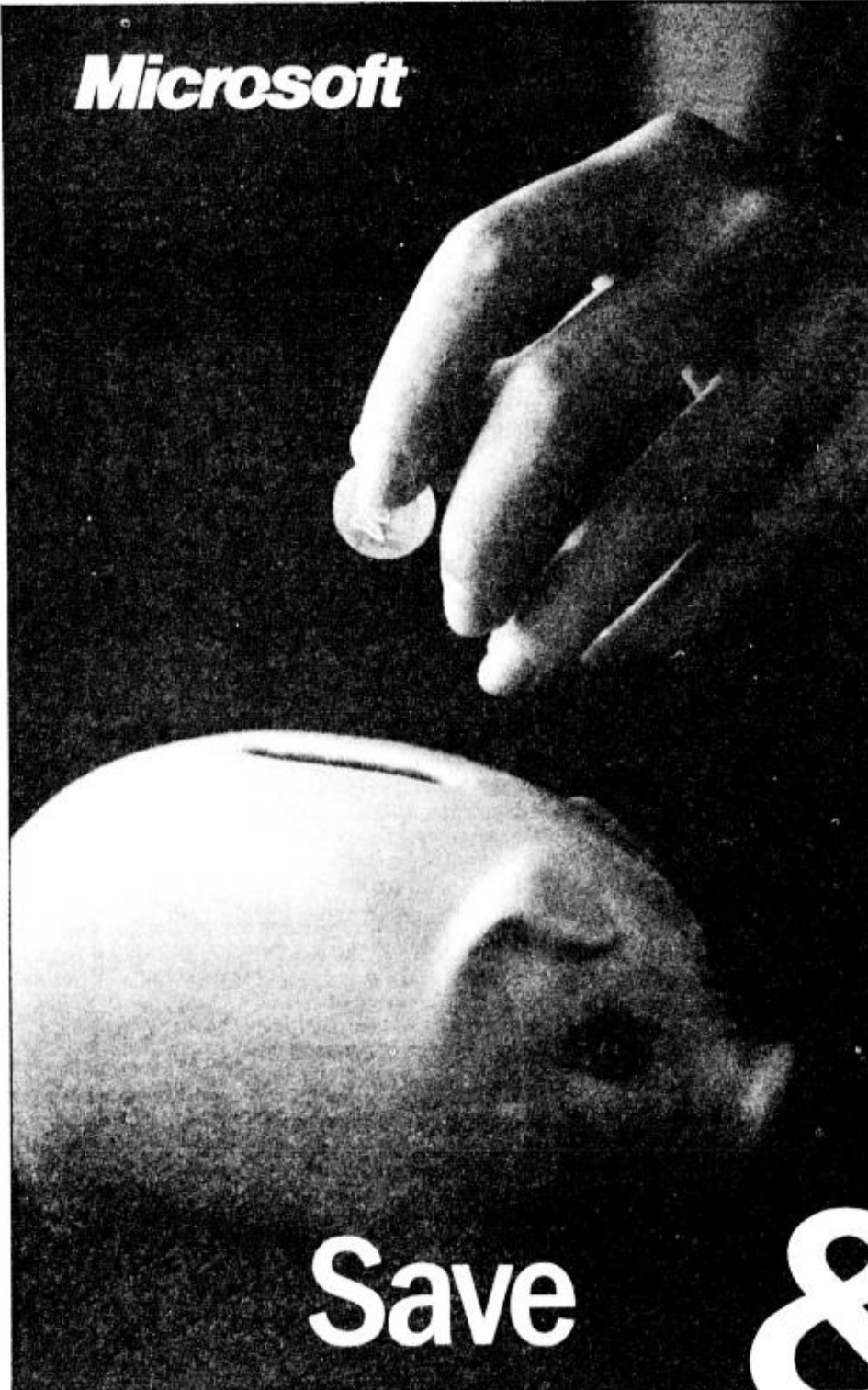
Cheating raps

The PPC and PnM have traded accusations of widespread cheating during the elections.

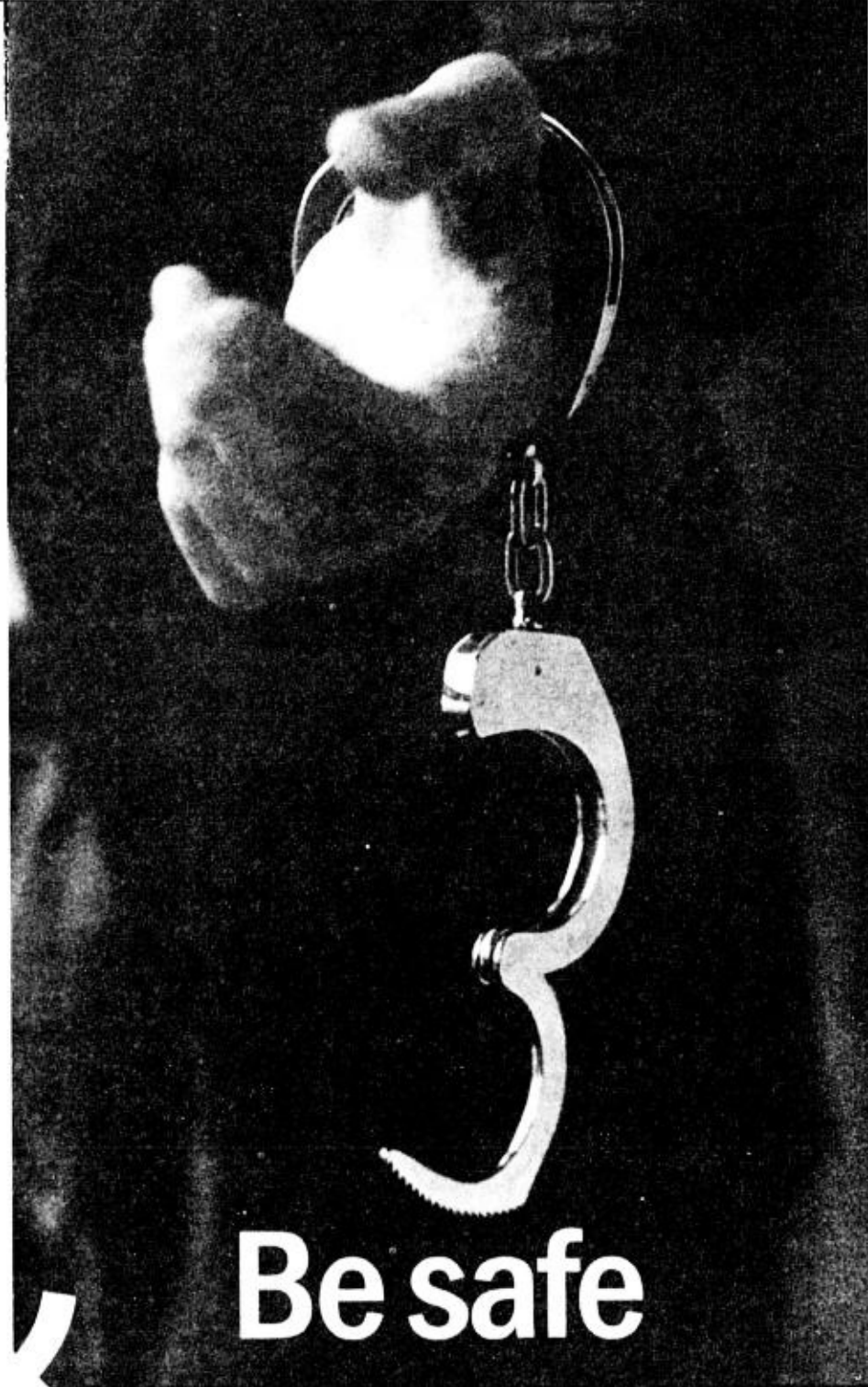
The NBC will also have to wait for the results in the special elections held last Saturday and those scheduled for May 30 in areas where a failure of elections had been declared due to violence and non-delivery of election materials.

The Comelec held special elections last Saturday in Matanog, Maguindanao; Pantar, Lanao del Norte; Barangay Cayontor in Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte; two precincts in Barangay Bancalaan in Balabac, Palawan; and five precincts in four barangays in Marantao, Lanao del Sur.

On May 30, special elections will be held in eight barangays in Barira, Maguindanao; three barangays in Nunungan, Lanao del Norte; two precincts in Pio Duran, Albay; 11 precincts in San Fernando, Masbate; and four precincts in Pio Corpuz, Masbate.



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Calauit sanctuary starving to death

(From page A1)

Female giraffes are two to three feet shorter than the males and may weigh just over half a ton.

Project manager Froilan Sariago acknowledged that the giraffes here, with names like Erap, Jinggoy and Baleleng, have become the flashpoint in the conflict between game wardens and members of the Balik-Calauit Movement, island settlers who were forcibly relocated to nearby Culion Island during the Marcos regime.

But Sariago is "not really sure the negative observations about the giraffes are valid."

The game preserve's resident veterinarian should know.

No vet, med tech

Unfortunately, the project does not have one, or a medical technologist to conduct laboratory procedures.

A lab equipped to facilitate diagnosis and treatment of most animal diseases is also non-existent here.

Sariago said they "used to have one veterinarian. We secured the services of the vet at the (government-sequestered) Yulo King Ranch on nearby Busuanga Island. He came here for three days at a time, but he has not shown up since January."

The sanctuary has repeatedly sent invitations to veterinary schools like the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, the Central Luzon State University and the Araneta University Foundation.

"But there has been no response so far," said Sariago. "The starting pay (P6,000 a month) and the contractual terms may have dampened applicants' enthusiasm."

Government funds for the project are also usually late. "Sometimes, there's no recourse but to live on rice and salt and, if one's lucky, a can of sardines," said Guillermo Aranas, one of the sanctuary's nine wardens.

Foot patrol

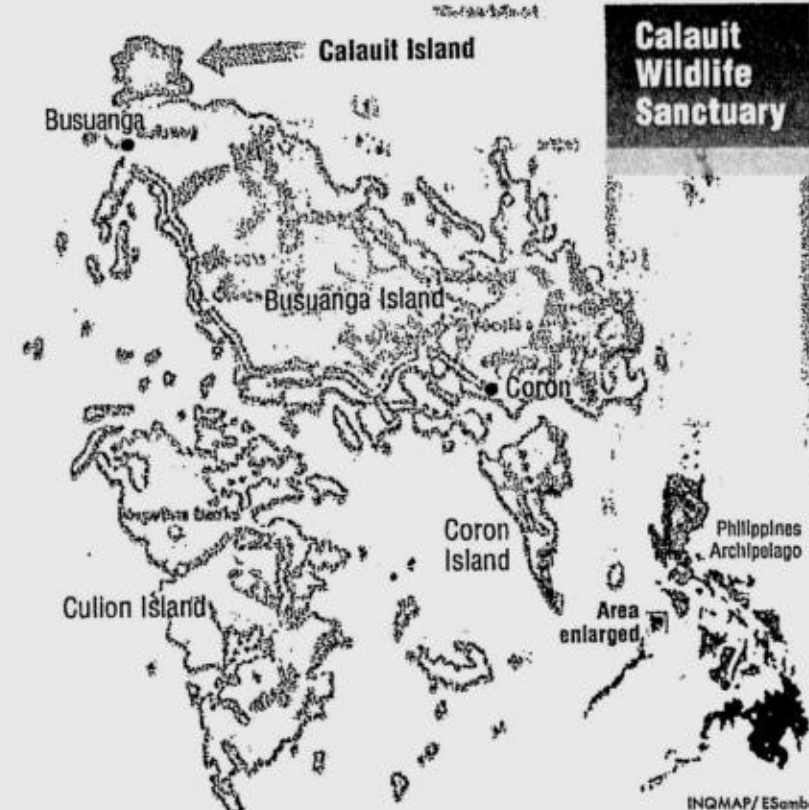
Aranas and the other wardens patrol the island on foot, armed with bolos and the project's only M-14 rifle.

Sariago, who gets about P10,000 a month, has often had to pay for emergency expenses out of his own pocket. The former Busuanga tax collector has been working here since the sanctuary opened in 1976.

Environmentalist Jose Ma. Lorenzo Tan observed: "They have had to tolerate hardships, reduced funding, political meddling, government indecisiveness, apathy and personal risk. To get an education, their children must leave home upon entering the first grade and live with relatives on another island. The alternative is to walk six hours each day just to get to school and back."

Truly, the government has not been kind to the game preserve's 40 or so employees, many of whom have been taking care of the imported animals since day one.

The Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD),



which runs the project and is under the Office of the President, does not consider them "employees."

In the PCSD budget, they are listed as "job orders" under the category of maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE), instead of personnel services like most government employees.

Casuals

"Technically, we are considered casuals or contractuals. Yes, we are employed but we have no job security," said Froilan's wife Edwina, a clerk at the sanctuary operations center.

An animal caretaker, who asked not to be named, noted: "The animals here seem to be more important than us. The government is trying very hard to ensure their survival but it is not doing its best to look after the people taking care of the animals."

With yearly funding of only P4.5 million to P5 million, it is clear the project is slowly being starved to death.

"We've been working on a baseline budget. Aside from Calauit, the PCSD has other projects to look after," said Romeo Dorado, PCSD finance and administrative officer.

From about 300 employees in the late '70s, budgetary cuts forced the sanctuary to trim its workers to 64 in the early '90s to only 41 today.

For the past five years, the PCSD budget totaled only P317.3 million.

This year, PCSD has an allocation of P87 million, P37.8 million of which will go to personnel services and P49.1 million for maintenance and other operating expenses. It is spending an additional P890,000 on capital outlay.

The PCSD has also set aside P27.1 million for the Palawan Tropical Integrated Area Development Project, which is foreign-assisted, and P19.2 million for the

Northern Palawan Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Project, which is backed by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

The "Calauit Game Preserve and Wildlife Sanctuary" is nowhere to be found in the government budget book.

DENR concern

The DENR, which has been fighting for jurisdiction over the wildlife sanctuary, asserts it is in a "much better position to operate the preserve." The department has an allocation of P4.85 billion this year.

Under Republic Act 7586, otherwise known as the National Integrated Protected Areas System or Nipas Law, wildlife sanctuaries like Calauit Island are the concern of the DENR.

Calauit also falls under the definition of a protected area, which refers to "identified portions of land and water set aside by reason of their unique physical and biological significance, managed to enhance biological diversity and protected against destructive human exploitation."

Again, the DENR believes this falls within its area of concern.

Calauit is both a national and a marine park, but in the PAWB listing of national parks, marine parks and marine reserves, only two in the Palawan area are cited—the St. Paul Subterranean River in Puerto Princesa and the Tubbataha Reef National Marine Park in the northern Sulu Sea.

The Calauit project's allocation also pales in comparison to the budget allocations of the PAWB projects, like the smaller Ninoy Aquino Park and Wildlife Center in Quezon City which got P109.5 million between 1997 and 2001.

In Puerto Princesa, the Crocodile Farm and Institute was given P72.1 million, while the Philippine Eagle Conservation Project and the Tamaraw Conservation Project got P61.8 million and P32.6 million,

respectively. PAWB funding for the last five-year period totaled P1.16 billion.

Court issue

The Department of Justice has opined that the PCSD has jurisdiction over Calauit, prompting the DENR to raise the issue before the courts.

When Marcos signed Executive Order No. 626 in March 1977 under a calumpang tree here (which, by the way, is still standing), he was joined by first lady Imelda Marcos and officials of the Ministry of Natural Resources, the agency tasked with handling the project for the first five years.

In 1981, the MNR turned over project management to the Presidential Committee for the Conservation of the Tamaraw (PCCT), then under Manda Elizalde who also headed the Presidential Assistance for National Minorities (Panamin). The PCCT operated the sanctuary until 1983.

For the next two years, the Department of Agriculture and Food and the Office of Muslim Affairs oversaw its operations.

In 1986, the DENR, which had administrative supervision over the project then, entrusted management of the game preserve to a non-government organization called Conservation and Resource Management Foundation (CRMF) headed by Dr. Frank Panol who, incidentally, owned the nearby Dimakya Island, site of the pricey Club Paradise resort.

The CRMF, which claimed to be a non-profit organization, depended on drawdowns from the DENR amounting to P3.5 million a year.

Citing CRMF violations of its contract with the government, including the alleged donation of wildlife to politicians and entering into a business deal with Club Paradise, the DENR took over the project in 1993.

Palawan agency

In December 1994, management of the sanctuary was transferred to the PCSD, which has been operating with an annual budget of P4.5 to P5 million, slightly lower than the project's funding level of P6 million in 1987.

The 11-member council is composed of the two Palawan congressmen, the governor, the Puerto Princesa City mayor, the presidents of the Palawan mayors' league and the barangay captains' association, and representatives of the departments of agriculture, environment and tourism and the National Economic Development Authority.

Over the last 10 years, Calauit "has not gone very far," claimed Tan, who also owns the publishing firm Bookmark.

Tan identified the sanctuary's major problems as the "presence of threats from over 130 families (belonging to the Balik-Calauit Movement) now settling in various parts of the sanctuary, the lack of political will and the major lack of funding support to continue the conservation work."

The animals, Tan reported, are "under extreme pressure. I have photographs of giraffes with all kinds of injuries, snares around their legs. The staff is very demoralized. They don't even have the money to repair equipment."

Assistant Prof. Lemuel Aragon of the Institute of Biological Sciences in UPLB had "more bad news."

Coral destruction

Aragones last month spent more than three weeks here with a group of marine zoology students. According to him, "the proportion of live coral around

the sanctuary is decreasing."

"From 60-70 percent in 1997, coral reef cover in the Bocot area was down to 54.1 percent last year. Current cover is only 37 percent. The overall status of coral reefs in the area ranges from poor to fair," he said, "and the condition is deteriorating."

Two of his students, Gregorio de la Rosa Jr. and Eva Christine Navales, suspect the coral depletion is caused by the cyanide used by local fishermen to catch fish, among other factors.

The UPLB group also observed that "the fish are getting smaller, indicating overexploitation of the commercial species" in the marine sanctuary.

In September 1995, the DENR and PAWB sent a veterinary team here to verify an INQUIRER report that warned that the African animals were dying.

Lim, a member of the team, recalled that the animals were emaciated and weak, and their growth was stunted.

"The animals seem to be suffering from syndromes of anemia and low protein in the blood which can be caused by a variety of reasons, the most important of which is parasitism," said a mission report.

The team's other findings: the sanctuary lacked manpower and proper animal diagnostic and records systems, there was evidence of parasitism in the animals; there was risk of disease outbreaks due to the presence of domestic animals, and the animals encroached on mangrove areas not suitable to them.

Crossbreeding

There was also evidence that BCM members were propagating domestic animals and even crossbreeding domestic and wild pigs, endangering the population of the latter species, which are endemic to Palawan.

According to Lim, the PAWB made technical recommendations "but when I returned to Calauit I didn't see any of them implemented."

Here on the island, things have not changed much since the DENR-PAWB team's visit, some project staffers acknowledged.

At least on paper, the agency running the sanctuary is looking ahead. In a September 1999 report, the PCSD acknowledged the "present insufficiency of funding and inadequacy of expertise for the proper care and maintenance of animals and facilities were the reasons for coming up with a proposal to open the preserve to interested private investors."

Privatization

On May 6, 1999, the PCSD passed a resolution authorizing council Executive Director Joselito Alisug to negotiate joint venture agreements with private firms to manage the sanctuary.

Palawan Rep. Vicente Sandoval, proponent of the privatization program, wants a self-sustaining wildlife preserve, "development with respect to the habitat of the animals."

But "the definition of what the private sector can and should do must be clearly set by government. It should be a private sector partner with a clear conservation policy, not the type that puts up golf courses or five-star resorts. You don't just deal with anybody who's got money," said Tan.

The PCSD is pushing for what it calls a "co-management scheme" in converting the island into a "nature park" of international standards with great emphasis on the preservation and protection of marine resources and endemic wildlife species.

There was no mention of the African animals in the master plan. (To be concluded tomorrow.)

Whodunit? Mike tags Abu Sayyaf

(From page A1)

abduction of 20 people, including three Americans, from the Dos Palmas resort in Palawan.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's spouse, however, may be barking up the wrong tree. Security officials said they could not ascertain yet what group was behind the raid.

"The people are angry at you, Abu Sayyaf. What you are doing is causing the entire country harm. What tourist in his right mind will come to the Philippines now?" Arroyo said in his weekly radio talk show.

"You must be mad for fighting your fellow Filipinos. Perhaps you are not Filipinos, you bunch of crazies," he said in Filipino.

"Gloria and the entire nation are united. Gloria will crush you," he added.

Other officials, however, voiced doubts whether the Abu Sayyaf was behind the daring attack.

"We don't have any strong confirmation as yet if they are Abu Sayyaf," presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said in Malacañang.

National Security Adviser Roilo Golez also cautioned newsmen against linking the Abu Sayyaf to the raid on the basis of reports that the gunmen spoke Tausug.

"The government has not identified the group. There is no reason to speculate. What's important is that we are pursuing the suspects," Golez told Davao City reporters over the telephone.

He said no contact had yet been made with the kidnappers.

"If they are Abu Sayyaf, we'll find out for sure later on," Gen. Diomedio Villanueva, Armed Forces chief of staff, added.

Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan, a military spokesperson, said people tended to blame all kidnappings in Western Mindanao on the Abu Sayyaf.

Invincible?

"It's not accurate... It gives them an image of invincibility," Adan said.

He said the abductions could have been carried out by "a splinter terrorist group whose appetite was whetted by the big ransom payments to the Abu Sayyaf last year."

The Abu Sayyaf, a small group of self-styled Islamic independence fighters, gained international notoriety in April last year when they raided a Malaysian resort and took 21 foreign and local hostages.

The hostages were held for months on the island of Jolo, about 480 kilometers to the south of the Dos Palmas resort across the Sulu Sea.

The Abu Sayyaf released many of their captives in exchange for hefty ransoms, while others were freed in a military assault.

"That is why the government is reiterating its no-ransom policy to discourage other lawless groups from taking advantage of the situation," Adan said.

He explained the military had been very careful in identifying the suspects because of the government's ongoing peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. With reports from Jowel F. Canuday and Jonathan F. Ma, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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Bandits abduct 20 in Palawan resort

(From page A1)

(speedboat) with three engines, the resort's security officer, Lt. Rudy Gorgonio, said.

After holding two guards at gunpoint, Gorgonio said the raiders immediately proceeded to the nine cottages near the receiving area where tourists were sleeping.

They grabbed 17 guests, two security guards and one male kitchen staff member, he said.

"It all happened very quickly. Everyone was stunned and no one could talk . . . It was all over in 15 to 20 minutes," Gorgonio said.

Dos Palmas officials said there were about 100 tourists at the resort.

The military's Western Command said three of those abducted were Americans and the rest were Filipinos, including an 8-year-old boy.

The Americans were identified as Martin Burnham, 41, and his wife Gracia, missionaries from Wichita, Kansas; and Guillermo Robero, 39.

The Burnhams have lived in the Philippines since 1986 and have been working for the New Tribes Mission, Tim Grossman, who was at the organization's Manila office yesterday, told the Associated Press.

They flew to the resort Saturday and listed their address as 333 Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City.

According to the AP report, Martin has spent most of his life in the Philippines. He and his wife—both children of missionaries—had been living in Nueva Vizcaya.

Robero, believed to be of Spanish descent, placed his address at 4045 Moody St., Corona, USA. He was with a Filipina, identified as Maria Fe Rosadeno, a native of Dagomboy Village here and reportedly Guillermo's girlfriend.

The boy was identified as RJ Recio, of Suite 520 MBE, 105 Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati City. He was reportedly with Recio Luis Raul de Guzman, Angie Montealegre and Divine Montealegre.

One of the hostages was identified as Regis Romero, 41, of 136 Malakas St., Diliman, Quezon City. It was not immediately known if he is the same Romero who owns RII Builders Corp.

With Romero was Maria Riza Rodriguez Santos, 30, of Hemady Street, New Manila, Quezon City.

The other hostages were identified as Janice Ting Go, 30, of Philamlife Tower, Makati, and her companion, Luis Bautista III, 32, of Mandaluyong City; Francis and Teresa, both surnamed Ganzon, of Parañaque City; Lalaine Chua; Kimberly Jao; and Letty Jao.

Also abducted were the resort's kitchen staff member Sandy Daquer and security guards, Armando Bayona and Eldrin Morales.

Military officials said planes and ships were deployed to search for the abductors and their captives in the high seas of Mindanao, many areas of which have been plagued by Moro separatists, pirates and other outlaws.

National Security Adviser J. Roilo Golez told a radio station that a motorboat believed carrying the kidnappers and hostages was spotted near Bugsuk Island on the southern tip of Palawan.

Capt. Djo Jalandoni of the Wescom said the raiders might be headed for Jolo Island, where the Abu Sayyaf is based.

Dos Palmas security officer Gorgonio said the gunmen spoke Tausug, the dialect spoken in Jolo.

Interrogations

Police interrogated two fishermen who had approached the receiving area before the armed men arrived at Dos Palmas. The fishermen, identified as Brando Cervantes, 20, and Alvic Cobillo, 20, said they were looking for some fishermen-friends.

It is not clear whether the fishermen, who were not presented to the media, were used as guides or were accomplices of the kidnappers.

Gorgonio said the security guard and the staff member were the ones who saw the incident. The attack lasted about 30 minutes and other guests did not learn of the presence of the armed men until news broke out in the morning.

Reports from the Puerto Princesa police said the armed men took with them some containers of gasoline and a handheld radio.

The *kumpit* reportedly sped off toward the northeast, although police officials said this might be a diversionary tactic and the boat could have changed course later.

A fisherman, who identified himself as Salvador Aton, told radio station rgMA here, that he saw a big gray *kumpit* around 6:15 a.m. coming from nearby Dos Palmas. It was heading southward, he said.

"I saw a *kumpit* which almost looked white as it sped. On board were bonnet-wearing men. It was going toward San Miguel, Tawi-Tawi," Aton said in Filipino.

The fisherman, who just came from tuna-fishing in the Malunao area, said he was familiar with the seas so he could not be mistaken about the direction where the boat was going.

Normal

Operations at Dos Palmas Resort have remained normal. Guests who have been booked could still get to the island, but walk-in arrangements are no longer being accommodated.

No demand for ransom has so far been relayed to the resort management.

All other tourist resorts on Palawan have been put on alert. Navy ships, as well as Air Force helicopters, had stepped up security around the island, the military said.

Allan Padian, spokesperson of Dos Palmas, said that after a similar raid on another resort island last week, security at the resort had been more than doubled before the kidnapping.

Padian said some panicky guests checked out and left the island under Coast Guard or Navy escort. But he stressed "we have pacified the fear of the guests," many of whom had chosen to remain.

Rescue operations

Gen. Diomedio Villanueva arrived here Sunday and immediately met with Gov. Joel Reyes, who also had a briefing with officers of the Wescom and the police.

"We are now scouring the shores of Palawan. It is an open sea and our aircraft and all available Navy vessels are scouring the area," Villanueva said.

Brig. Gen. Rodolfo Rabago, Wescom chief, said he had dispatched two Navy vessels and one S-211 aircraft to intercept the kidnappers and their victims.

Army spokesperson Lt. Col. Jose Mabanta said a contingent from the Marines had been deployed to support interception and rescue operations.

"We will deal with this with caution and resolve," Mabanta told defense reporters. "The Philippine Army and the entire armed forces will not tolerate this."

It was the second attack by gunmen on a tourist resort in the country's volatile south in five days.

Just before midnight on Tuesday, gunmen attacked the Pearl Farm, a tourist resort on the Island Garden City of Samal, killing two people and snatching two hostages, who were later released.

Troops are chasing the gang, which retreated to the mountains after snatching four villagers to use as human shields. *With reports from Carlito Pablo and Inquirer wires*

Malaysia on alert for bandits

(From page A1)

ment," Golez said on local television.

The joint border patrol agreement is aimed at curbing smuggling, drug trafficking and piracy in the Celebes and Sulu Seas.

Malaysian Ambassador to the Philippines Arshad Hussain said that Malaysia would "definitely tighten up its maritime borders" to prevent the entry of "undesirable elements."

"If the Philippines has alerted us, we'll surely cooperate," he said.

But Hussain stressed: "Malaysia is no safe haven for criminals and kidnappers."

On April 23 last year, Abu Sayyaf gunmen raided the Malaysian diving resort of Sipadan, off the Sabah coast, and fled to their Jolo island stronghold with 10 Western tourists

and 11 resort workers.

On Sept. 10 they raided Pandanan island near Sipadan and seized three Malaysians.

All but one of the Sipadan and Pandanan hostages either escaped or were freed, some of them after the payment of millions of dollars in ransom to the bandits.

Malaysia has mounted a huge land, air and sea security operation on resort islands and in waters off Sabah since last year's abductions.

It plans shortly to introduce designated sea lanes off the state to make it easier to check suspicious craft.

For its part, the US Embassy said it was leaving it to the Philippine government "to secure the release of all the victims."

Tom Skipper, embassy spokesperson, said the embassy was still checking with the US state department whether three of those abducted were indeed US citizens.

Americans travelling to the Philippines were advised to check with the US Embassy for the latest security information.

Heightened security at the Dos Palmas resort, however, failed to stop the attack.

After a raid on the Pearl Farm resort in Davao last week, security at the Dos Palmas resort was more than doubled, the resort's spokesman Allan Padian said.

The gunmen met no resistance Sunday when they raided beachfront cottages at Dos Palmas and even took one of the guard's M-16 assault rifles, Padian admitted.

Padian said a ban on the carrying of firearms was imposed ahead of the May 14 elections and prevented the hotel from issuing more guns to their guards. *Reports from AFP and Rocky Nazareno*

Walang Maliti

Walang Malaki

Walang Malapit

Walang Malayo.

Walang Magaan

Walang Mabigat

Walang Hindi Mararating

Walang Hindi Makakarating

Walang Dapat Ipangamba



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SPORTS

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BASKETBALL: This Week in the NBA at 11:30 a.m. on CNN
 NBA Conference Finals - Spurs vs Lakers, Game 4 at noon on RPN 9 (r- 5:30 p.m. on IBC 13) and 9 p.m. (r) on ESPN, Sixers vs Bucks, Game 4 tomorrow at 5:30 a.m. on ESPN
 1985 L.A. Lakers - Return to Glory at 1 p.m. (r) on ESPN
 Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

RP athletes land at 9th

DARWIN, Australia—A Philippine delegation composed of virtual unknowns from the Visayas and Mindanao capped a resounding campaign here by finishing at ninth spot in the tough 31-nation Arafura Games. The Filipino athletes won seven gold, 10 silver and three bronze medals for the country's second-best finish in six stagings of the event.

NBA SEMIS

Bucks subdue Iverson-less 76ers, grab 2-1 lead in East

MILWAUKEE—With the injured Allen Iverson watching from his hotel room, the Milwaukee Bucks had a surprisingly tough time defeating what remained of the Philadelphia 76ers.

In a game that stayed close longer than it should have, the Bucks held off the Iverson-less 76ers, 80-74, on Saturday to take a 2-1 lead in the Eastern Conference finals.

Iverson stayed at the team hotel to rest his sore left hip, making it seem like the Sixers were sacrificing a game for the sake of having a healthier Iverson for the remainder of the series. But Iverson's coach and teammates did not roll over and quit.

Holding the Bucks to just four points over a 9-1/2-minute stretch of the fourth quarter, the Sixers were within seven points with 3:23 left. They had three chances to get even closer but missed shots each time.

Violation
 By the time the Bucks committed a 24-second violation with 36.6 seconds left, that seven-point deficit was too much for the Sixers to overcome. Aaron McKie hit two foul shots with 34.2 seconds left to make it a five-point game, but Cassell hit a foul shot and McKie missed a 3-pointer to end the suspense.

Cassell scored 24 points, Ray Allen had 20 and Glenn Robinson 18 for the Bucks, while Ervin Johnson out-rebounded Dikembe Mutombo 13-10.

McKie scored 22 points and Jumaine Jones had 16 for Philadelphia, which hopes to have Iverson back for Game 4 Monday (Tuesday in Manila).

After Iverson missed 21 of 26 shots in a loss to Milwaukee on Thursday, Philadelphia coach Larry Brown said he preferred Iverson stay home and get more rest.

"I left it up to him," Brown said. "I didn't think it was my place to make the decision for him. I'm proud

of what he's done. I really appreciate the fact that he tried to play the first two games being as banged up as he was, and hopefully we'll get him well."

Brown came up with every gimmick he could, employing a full court press, using a two-center, three-guard alignment and running his offense through the low post. The strategies caused the Bucks some difficulties, which were compounded by their tendency to let up whenever they built a seemingly comfortable lead.

Milwaukee went ahead, 73-60, early in the fourth on a jumper by Allen, but then went more than 6 1/2 minutes without scoring a point.

The Sixers pulled within six on a 3-pointer by Jones with 7:25 left, but failed to score on their next three possessions.

Jumpers

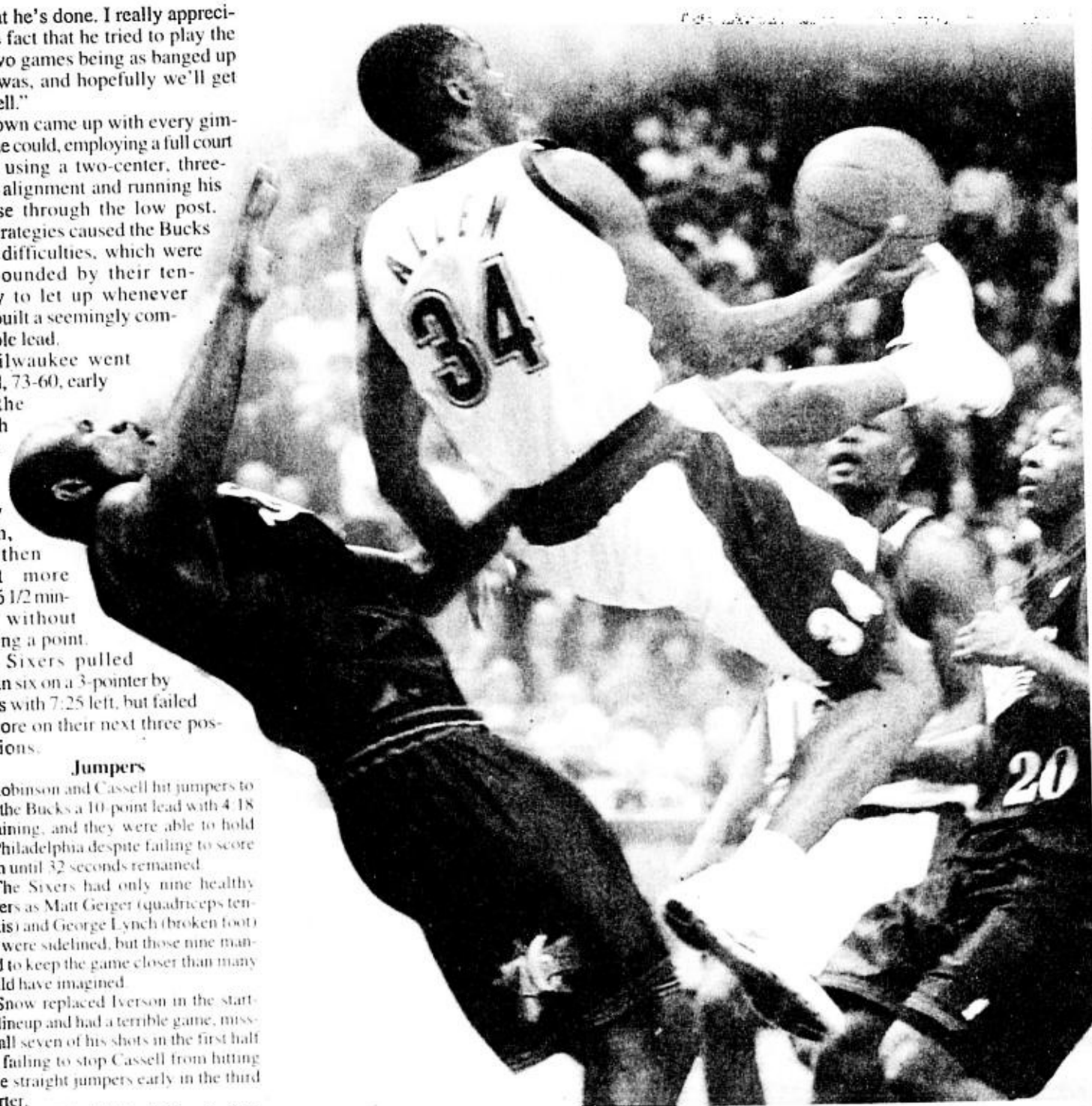
Robinson and Cassell hit jumpers to give the Bucks a 10-point lead with 4:18 remaining, and they were able to hold off Philadelphia despite failing to score again until 32 seconds remained.

The Sixers had only nine healthy players as Matt Geiger (quadriceps tendinitis) and George Lynch (broken foot) also were sidelined, but those nine managed to keep the game closer than many would have imagined.

Snow replaced Iverson in the starting lineup and had a terrible game, missing all seven of his shots in the first half and failing to stop Cassell from hitting three straight jumpers early in the third quarter.

Snow finished 1-for-11 from the field and 2-for-6 from the line with six turnovers and two assists.

AP



RAY Allen (34) of the Bucks loses his balance after getting fouled by Jermaine Jones of the 76ers (left) in the third quarter.

Confident Lakers eye sweep today

LOS ANGELES—Unbeaten in the playoffs, one victory away from a sweep of the San Antonio Spurs in the Western Conference finals, the Los Angeles Lakers have become the team that coach Phil Jackson always thought they could be.

Even Spurs star Tim Duncan seemed to understand that the conclusion of the series is a mere formality.

"We have to make this last game as tough as possible," he said.

The only way today's Game 4 can be the Spurs' "last" is if they lose, just as they have three consecutive times to a Lakers team on a roll that could make NBA history.

Shaquille O'Neal has been as dominant in the middle as ever. Kobe Bryant has transformed from a talented but erratic player who sometimes shoots too much into a cool, controlled floor manager who has made everyone around him better.

"The combination of the two of them is all that I envisioned they could be," Jackson said Saturday.

The Lakers, winners of 18 in a row, 10 of them in the playoffs, didn't practice Saturday. They did some shooting, lifted weights and watched video of their 111-72 manhandling of the Spurs Friday night.

It was the Lakers' most one-sided victory and Spurs' most one-sided loss in the playoffs since Los Angeles beat San Antonio 135-88 in 1986.

O'Neal underwent treatment on the left ankle he twisted early in the fourth quarter Friday. He wore a flip-flop sandal instead of a shoe, and admitted the ankle was sore.

"I'll be all right," he said. "It will probably be sore tomorrow, too, but once the adrenalin gets going, nothing will matter."

Jackson said he didn't expect the soreness to limit O'Neal's time on the court.

"We think he's going to be able to function fine," Jackson said. "I just don't think he's going to be as powerful or as dominant as he could be because he's going to lose a little bit of power."

Jackson's praise for Bryant's maturation was effusive.



BRYANT



O'NEAL

Asian U tilt set June 3-9

IT'S all systems go for the Asian Universities Basketball Championship on June 3 to 9 at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

Two foreign squads and four local teams will see action in the weeklong event organized by the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

The games will be aired live over IBC-13. Former Philippine president Fidel V. Ramos, education secretary Raul Roco and Philippine Olympic Committee chair Robert Avenajado have been invited to attend the opening ceremonies.

BAP president Quintellano "Tiny" Literal said the event will be held under the auspices of the Asian University Sports Federation while the local teams are National Collegiate Athletic Association champion College of St. Benilde, Inter-collegiate champion St. Francis of Assisi College, Universities Athletic Association of the Philippines runner-up Far Eastern University, University of Manila, which won the first edition of this tournament in 1998.

Tournament format is a single round-robin wherein the top two teams will slug it in the finals.

Yao out next season

CHINESE phenom Yao Ming, the 7-6, 20-year-old Olympian coveted by many NBA teams, won't be seeing action in the NBA next season after his local club, the Shanghai Sharks, refused to grant him permission to join next month's NBA draft.

While Yao and spitfire Jason Williams, a 6-2 sophomore All-American from NCAA champion Duke, are not available for the draft, a record 75 players, including 17 international stars, chose to give up their remaining collegiate eligibility and applied for early entry to the 2001 draft to be held in New York on June 27 (June 28, Manila time).

The early-entry list, which is headed by All-Americans Joseph Forte (6-4 sophomore) of North Carolina and Troy Murphy

NBA NOTES

Henry Liao



(6-11 junior) of Notre Dame, includes six high school players, the most ever. They are 6-11 Kwame Brown of Glyn Academy HS (Georgia), 7-foot Tyson Chandler of Dominguez HS (California), 6-9 Ousmane Cisse of St. Jude Catholic HS (Alabama), 6-11 Eddy Curry of Thornwood HS (Illinois), 7-foot Senegalese De

Sagana Diop of Oak Hill Academy (Virginia) and 6-10 Tony Key of Centennial HS (California).

Five of the prep seniors are expected to be taken in the first round of the two-round 57-man draft (Minnesota forfeited its first-round as part of its settlement with the NBA in the illegal Joe Smith signing fiasco), with Curry, Brown and Chandler probably going 1-2-3. So far, no high school player has ever been drafted No. 1 overall.

Another top-notch early-entry candidate is Eddie Griffin, a 6-9 freshman out of Seton Hall.

Early-entry prospects who have not hired agents can withdraw their names from draft consideration as late as June 20. A year ago, there were 56 American-trained (college undergradu-

ates and high school seniors) and international players on the early-entry list but 19 withdrew their names, leaving only 37 available. Twenty-five eventually were chosen in the draft.

The Washington Wizards won the draft lottery last week and earned the right to pick first in the 2001 draft. Indications, however, point to the Wizards trading the selection. Washington executive and part-owner Michael Jordan, who is considering a second comeback as a player, has said he would be reluctant to choose a high school senior or a player with limited collegiate experience. He said he might ship the No. 1 pick for a veteran who can provide help immediately.

FedEx Laguna hungry for 1st MBA crown

AFTER a series of near misses, the Laguna Lakers are determined to clinch their first Metropolitan Basketball Association crown this year.

"We're really dead-set on winning. It's about time," said Lito Alvarez, president and chief operating officer of the sponsoring FedEx.

It's not an empty boast of course. The Lakers underwent a major build-up during the pre-season to make sure that they don't get bumped off the national finals.

Bruiser Randy Lopez and shooter Junel Mendiola were recruited, while Mon Regidor, Richard Melencio and Val Domingo were reacquired to further bolster the Lakers roster.

"This will be a fighting team," assured Alvarez. "Everything is now proceeding according to plan."

The Lakers have gotten back to serious training after actively campaigning for team owner Bert Lina during the recent elections.

Alvarez also based his optimism on the acceptance of the Lakers to the role-playing scheme being implemented by Coach Bonnie Garcia.

"The players are slowly shrugging off their individualistic tendencies. And with our depth, we can go places," said Alvarez.

Back to start for the Lakers are Fil-Ams Chris Clay and Jeffrey Flowers, hotshot Biboy Simon and the much-improved Chris Nicdao. The 6-foot-2 Mendiola will complete the tall first five as Flowers is 6-foot-8, Clay 6-4, Nicdao 6-5 and Simon 6-1.

Alvarez welcomed the arrival of the 6-5 Lopez, who like Nicdao has demonstrated inside-outside strength.

The support crew is composed of 6-3 Mike Garcia, 6-3 Jerome Barbosa, 6-7 Val Domingo, 6-0 Genesis Sasuman, 6-1 Melencio and 5-10 Regidor.

This early, Alvarez is drooling over the prospect of finally hoisting the championship trophy.

Burlington 5 triumphs

BURLINGTON Performance Socks recently captured the New Association for Basketball Aficionados (Naba) cage

tourney at the Far Eastern University gym.

The pre-tournament favorite, the Burlington Sockmakers did not disappoint their fans by winning the crown in convincing fashion. The Most Valuable

Player award also went to Burlington cager Michael Tan.

The Naba champions are composed mostly of players from top schools in the Filipino-Chinese community.

Burlington general manager Ruddy Tan fully supported the team in the summer league.

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Player award also went to Burlington cager Michael Tan. The Naba champions are composed mostly of players from top schools in the Filipino-Chinese community. Burlington general manager Ruddy Tan fully supported the team in the summer league.

Wind Blown wins Prieto Cup

BY EDWIN VILLANUEVA

WIND Blown hardly broke a sweat in tuning up for his next big race as he routed the field in the Prieto Cup yesterday at the San Lazaro Hippodrome.

Star jockey Fernando Raquel Jr. guided Wind Blown to a leisurely five-length victory in the 1,900-meter event which served as the massive colt's warmup run for the coming Gran Copa de Manila.

"Dominado nya ang mga kalaban kasi wala si Silver Story eh (He dominated the field because Silver Story is not around)," said Raquel of his mount.

Raquel also referred to Silver Story, this year's hot Triple Crown candidate considered as Wind Blown's chief rival whom he routed in the First

Gentleman Cup recently.

Wind Blown, the former pride of sportsman-businessman Sandy Javier, bagged P300,000. Winning time was 2:00.5 (17-24-25.5-25.5-28.5).

Super Sharp finished second followed by Master Ighay, Materiales Fuertes and Project Genesis. Gold Edition was scratched.

The race, originally dubbed the 1867 Founders' Cup, was renamed the Prieto Cup honoring the Prieto family for their great contribution to the development of the Manila Jockey Club and local horse racing industry.

Last year's staging was won by Putch Puyat's Charlemagne.

In the day's other featured event, Rudy Mendoza's Golden Eagle got a big lift from Jeffrey Ladiana to top the Tab Philippines Cup and pocket P200,000.



ALEX Prieto (right) congratulates star jockey Fernando Raquel Jr. after the latter piloted Wind Blown to victory in the Prieto Cup yesterday. Looking on (from left) are Manila Jockey Club president Alfonso Rayno Jr. and Senator-elect Franklin Drilon. VAL HANDUMON

Jungolf T of C starts at Tat Filipinas today

STANDOUTS of the highly successful 2001 summer circuit of the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines settle the issue of who's the best when the Jungolf Tournament of Champions is held starting today at the Tat Filipinas course in San Pedro, Laguna. Tee-off time is 9:30 a.m.

The Top 10 jungolfers in each five age-group classifications will be leading the field in the 54-hole culmination of a 10-leg, Luzon-wide circuit sponsored by Northwest Airlines as the official carrier.

According to Merwin Mediana, president of Jungolf, said that as an added requirement, only jungolfers who had played in a minimum of four legs in the circuit will be allowed to see action.

The tournament will also determine the composition of the Philippine delegation to the Junior World champi-

onships in San Diego, California and the Optimist International in Florida this coming July. The entire team will be flown to the US by Northwest.

There are 24 slots to be disputed for each of the San Diego and Florida trips where Jungolf chair Amalia Montecillo will again serve as head of the contingent.

"We've been blessed with a very active field this year. But what is more important here is that we have seen a lot of promising talents who can spark our drive for glory in the US," said Mediana.

The players to watch are Artemio Murakami and Katrina Gonzales in Class A, Asian junior champ Judson Eustaquio and Jayvie Agojo in Class B, Tonton Asistio and Gerileon Handog in Class C, John Kier Abdon and Debbie de Villa in Class D and Joshua Uy in Class E.

Alabang hosts Alaga meet

THE ATENEO Law Alumni Golf Association (Alaga) will stage the First Gentleman's Alaga Golf, a fund-raising project being held in honor of Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, on June 5 at the Alabang Country Club course.

Proceeds from the event which is part of the 2001 homecoming activities of the law school on June 8 at the Rockwell campus will be used for specific special public service programs of the Ateneo Law Alumni Foundation Inc. (Alafl).

The event has been assured of the support of All Asian Countertrade Inc.'s Michael Escaler, the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.'s Manny Pangilinan, lawyer Louie Sison of the Philippine National Construction Corp., Gov. Rafael Evangelista of Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Johnny Santos of Nestle Philip-

pines, lawyer Claro Certeza of Jollibee Foods Corp., Johnson & Johnson Phils., Philippine Airlines; Allied Banking Corp.; Standard Chartered Bank, Cinnabon of Arben Santos and the family of Congressman Leandro Vercelles Jr.

Open to the first 150 golfing alumni and special friends of the Ateneo Law School, deadline for sponsorship and registration is June 3. Entry fee is P2,000 for non-Alabang members and P1,000 for members, covering green fees, food and drinks and raffle.

Interested sponsors and alumni participants are requested to contact either Marissa of the Alafl Secretariat at 8994346 or 8994373 or the Alaga Secretariat headed by tournament director Ed Gaddi at tel. Nos. 8262103 or 8264205 and fax No. 8261224.

Zaguirre rules Tom's 4WD meet

JONATHAN Zaguirre of Team Benetton dominated the second leg of the Tom's Sports Mini 4WD Challenge 2001 at the Robinson's Plaza Manila.

Zaguirre, a 32-year-old operator of a family-owned printing press in Makati, won over 302 other entries in this one day competition organized by actor-sportsman Jonnari Yllana and sponsored by Bench, Yamaha, Joey 92.3, KCFM 93.9, Daewoo and Chowking.

Zaguirre personally received his medal and P5,000 cash prize from Yllana and Tom's Sports events director Renzelle Mae Abasolo. Allan Lirio of Team TRP finished second, while Rascor Lee Ruto of Savanna wound up third overall.

Lirio and Ruto pocketed P3,000 and P1,000, respectively. The third leg of the prestigious, six part series, which offers the top prize of P20,000 or a scooter to the overall champion, will also be held at Robinson's Place Manila on June 23.

The championship round will be staged on Aug. 11. Interested participants can inquire about the competition at the Tom's Sports International Corp. at 352 Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City or call tels. 534-1457 and 535-0455 or e-mail at tomssport@skynet.net.

Athletes staging another rally

SPORTS in general and the athletes in particular will suffer as a result of the bitter conflict in the Philippine Olympic Committee. The POC is a house divided and if nobody tries to fix it, then the troublesome situation will only get worse.

What we need, said concerned sports lovers, is a strong leader who can decide quickly regardless of who will be hurt; someone who can show more teeth, not much tail, at the first sign of trouble; someone who can move fast enough to plug the hole and prevent the ship from sinking.

Because of the leadership crisis in the POC, I was told that several national athletes and officials of the various National Sports Associations are set to stage another rally which is bigger and noisier. It is primarily aimed at resolving the problem at the POC headed by Celso Dayrit and preventing the further retrogression of Philippine sports.

Only recently, former POC presidents Cristy Ramos, Michael Keon, Gov. Josae Sering and Julian Malonso expressed disenchantment over the sorry state of Philippine sports.

In particular, the fiery Ramos called for the ouster of POC president Dayrit, who replaced her after she was kicked out of the post in 1999, saying, Dayrit is ineffective, unreliable and nowhere to be found when a problem arises.

"His leadership style is all pa-pogi, pa-cute. Yan ang rason kaya magulo ngayon," said Ms. Ramos.

On the other hand, Keon said, "There's too much politics in sports today. Too much in fighting and bickering among our leaders, which should not happen. These petty quarrels are destroying sports as well as the future of our athletes."

Sering, who served as POC chief after Keon, lamented the apparent lack of camaraderies, resulting in the crippling in-fighting in the various NSAs, including basketball, weightlifting, cycling, karate and softball.

Keon, chief architect of Gintong Alay, and Sering, many-time governor of Surigao del Norte, said warring sports leaders should sit down and talk. Besides, Keon stressed, our athletes shouldn't be hearing about these petty differences while they are preparing for the Southeast Asian Games which is just a few months away.

Malonso, an Olympic purist and retired Spanish professor at Letran, said there are associations which are headed by people who are not really sports lovers. "These people are using the position for their prestige and travels. Even the IOC (International Olympic Committee) representative to the Philippines (Frank Elizalde) travels a lot, not to mention that he is remiss in his duty to protect the Olympic movement."

Malonso explained that Elizalde "interfered" in the last POC elections and in the ouster of Cristy Ramos as POC president. The former gymnastics head added the POC should be composed of men and women who believe in the Olympic movement. "Unfortunately, some of them are even of doubtful character without athletic background."

CLEAN LIVING



Manolo R. Iñigo

Tough draw

PARIS—Venus Williams, who has yet to reach the semifinals in four trips to the French Open, will face the toughest draw among the top women when the tournament begins Monday.

Williams, seeded second, opens against Barbara Schett, an Austrian who reached the fourth round last year and is ranked 24th.

On the men's side, No. 5-seeded Pete Sampras caught a break when he drew a qualifier for his opening match. Sampras has a record 13 Grand Slam titles but none at Roland Garros, where he has won only four matches over the past four years.

Friday's draw gives him a chance for a good start against an opponent to be determined. AP

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Globe Telecom: Teaching little leaders through quality education

The Center of Excellence in Public Elementary Education (CENTEX), was recently inaugurated in Bauan, Batangas. A collaboration between Ayala Foundation Inc., DECS, and the provincial government of Batangas, CENTEX-Batangas is principally funded by Globe Telecom. CENTEX offers bright students from marginalized communities the highest standards of education – thus making it possible for such intellectually-gifted children to avail of competitive education. The Batangas CENTEX is actually the second of a series of schools that is planned to be put up all over the country. The first CENTEX school, pioneered by Ayala Foundation in 1998, is located in Tondo, Manila.

The goal of each CENTEX school is to empower the Filipino child to develop into a total human being dedicated to the service of the country, to caring for others, and to nurturing the environment. To ensure the quality of education of the program, a team of renowned

educators from both the private and government sectors have come together to develop an advanced curriculum especially for CENTEX. "The curriculum is very well-rounded and highly-integrated," says Carol Atacador, CENTEX project director. "It is totally brain-based education, we harness the total capability of the human brain."

Aside from academic subjects, CENTEX also focuses on traditional values and on the emotional tools a child needs to survive adulthood. "We want to expose our children to things beyond what rural life can offer," stresses Atacador. "We want them to be able to compete locally and globally. CENTEX children are critical thinkers who are not afraid to express themselves. They are articulate but polite. Globally competitive but innately and proudly Filipino. Most of all, we want them to be tomorrow's leaders who will go back to their communities to enhance the lives of fellow Filipinos."



EDUCATION SECRETARY ROCO GRACES CENTEX INAUGURATION. Education Secretary Raul Roco was recently the guest-of-honor at the inauguration of CENTEX. Shown in photo are Secretary Roco with CENTEX Volunteers Fernando and Kit Zobel, Ambassador Jacky Foo of Singapore, Singapore Telecom Philippines Managing Director Edward Ying and other guests.

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To give Filipino children the chance to develop into well-rounded human beings through quality education. This is the goal of the Center of Excellence in Public Elementary Education (CENTEX), a special learning center in Bauan, Batangas principally funded by Globe Telecom. CENTEX aims to bring the highest standards of education to bright children from underprivileged families. The center strives to produce graduates who will be leaders -- men and women who are not only academically excellent but socially responsible, capable of making decisions based on the community they serve. Having opened its doors in October 2000 to 76 kindergarten students, CENTEX has already marked much success in instilling good quality education to its deserving young pupils.

To know more about how you can help CENTEX, call 894-5620 or fax 813-4488.

METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Malonzo warns of 'crisis'

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA AND LOUIE JON A. SANCHEZ

POLITICAL CRISIS. Breakdown of services. Threats of violence.

Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo yesterday warned that these would hit Caloocan if the Commission on Elections would grant a petition to declare a failure of election in the city.

MALONZO/A26



GOOD NEWS is marred by falling-out between Aga's dad Cheng and talent manager Ethel Ramos. ERNIE SARMIENTO

Charlene 3 months pregnant

BY LEAH SALTERIO

CHARLENE Gonzales, the actress, TV dance show host and former beauty queen who is marrying actor Aga Muhlach at St. Joseph's Church

CHARLENE/A26

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Jeepney barker cleared Cop attacker, boy go to jail

of killing old woman

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA
AND LOUIE JON A. SANCHEZ

A CALOOCAN regional trial court has cleared a jeepney barker of robbing and killing a 78-year-old woman in 1998.

Judge Bayani Rivera dismissed the case against Jose Valdevilla Jr., 22, after the prosecution failed to prove that he was the man who robbed and killed Sabina Javison.

The old woman was found dead on May 6, 1998 in her store in Brixtonville Subdivision, with a pair of scissors still planted in her chest.

Witnesses tagged Valdevilla as the one who broke into the store and killed the woman.

Emmanuel Borbon, whose house was located just across the woman's store, told the court he saw Valdevilla break into Javison's

house on the morning of the murder.

But instead of seeking the help of jeepney drivers nearby, he went back to his house and kept quiet, court records showed.

Another witness, jeepney driver Edward Amoyan, claimed that a day before the killing, Valdevilla sought his help to open the window of Javison's store to steal viands. The jeepney driver told the court he refused to help Valdevilla.

Teresita Asierito, the victim's niece who was living in a house nearby, testified that her aunt had shown her several pieces of jewelry the day before she was killed. She said her aunt told her the jewels were kept in an *attaché* case.

When Javison was found dead the following day, Asierito claimed the jewelry was missing and the

attaché case was empty.

In a 10-page decision, Rivera said the testimonies failed to establish Valdevilla's guilt.

Borbon, the judge pointed out, should not have retreated into his house and should have sought help from jeepney drivers if he indeed saw Valdevilla enter Javison's store.

Amoyan did not know what happened the day after Valdevilla allegedly sought his help to steal from Javison's store, the judge said.

Rivera refused to buy Asierito's testimony, which he described as "overkill," since the witness was living in a separate house at the time of the killing.

The judge said Asierito could not have determined that her aunt had been robbed of her jewelry since she was not living in the old woman's house.

A JOBLESS man and a boy are spending time together at the Marikina City jail after they were arrested separately on Friday—the man for attacking a policeman, the boy for allegedly stealing money.

Marikina policemen arrested Lister Ogbac, 29, of Purok Champaca 1, shortly after he stabbed Arnaldo Agapito, a traffic enforcer detailed to Parang, also in Marikina.

Supt. John Caoile, Marikina deputy chief of police for admission, said Agapito, 25, was patrolling Champaca 1 for illegal vendors when Ogbac approached him at about

7:30 p.m. Friday.

Agapito, a resident of Bagong Silang Street also in Marikina, remained unsuspicious of Ogbac until the latter pulled out a knife and lunged at him, police said.

Agapito suffered slight injuries but managed to evade his attacker and to grab the knife from Ogbac, police said.

Ogbac was drunk when he stabbed Agapito, who was immediately brought to the Rodriguez Medical Center after the attack, police said.

Earlier, Marikina police arrested a 12-year-old boy for allegedly stealing P1,760 from a *sari-sari* store on

Munding Avenue in Sto. Niño.

The boy, a resident of Pajo Street Kaliwa in Proj. 2, Quezon City, was charged with theft after the store owner allegedly caught him and his companions in the act of opening the cash box.

Storeowner Jonilyn Juan told police the boy entered the unattended store at about 2:15 p.m. Friday and would have escaped if her husband had not caught him.

Police said the boy's companions were able to flee with the money and only P40 was recovered from the boy.

Lady Ann Briguera

Malonzo warns of 'crisis'

(From page A25)

Malonzo, who ran in the May 14 polls for a third and final term, said his supporters would stage protest actions "if the Comelec would not recognize their will."

"Expect violence, rallies, political crisis, and breakdown of services," he said. "How can we accept an election failure if the election was in fact clean?"

The mayor issued the warning after the Comelec suspended his proclamation to review a petition of mayoral candidate Rep. Luis "Baby" Asistio and other opposition members for a declaration of an election failure in the city.

The Asistio camp claimed the delay in the opening of many polling precincts in Caloocan on May 14 resulted in massive fraud and the disenfranchisement of voters.

They said chaotic distribution of election materials by the city treasurer's office caused the delay.

The canvassing of votes was completed yesterday, but the Comelec has yet to release the final results.

Based on his own count, Malonzo said he was leading in the mayoral race with 147,252 votes, against Asistio's 119,277.



MALONZO emerges with a thumbs-up from the Comelec canvassing venue.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Asistio's older brother, former Mayor Macario "Boy" Asistio Jr., was also trailing Malonzo's partymate, Councilor Edgar Erice, 49,996 to 51,925, according to the same count.

If the Comelec would grant Baby Asistio's petition, Malonzo would still be mayor.

But even then, Malonzo pointed out that such a decision would trigger unrest among his followers since they would be deprived of their "real will."

"The election was delayed, but it never failed," Malonzo said.

He also warned that supporters of the Asistios might even cause trouble with the brothers' defeat.

"Asistio supporters are violent," he said. "But it's a different story if they hurt my men."

The disorderly distribution of

election materials, according to Malonzo, was part of the Asistios' "grand plan" to disrupt the election.

"It was designed to sow hatred among the people against my administration," he said.

He said the distribution of election materials should not have been in disarray since there were three distribution centers in the city on election day. The centers were located in the main and north city halls and in Bagong Barrio.

Malonzo said he will form today a task force to investigate the election fiasco and identify those behind it.

He said the committee will be composed of representatives from the Philippine National Police, the education department, Comelec, the Office of the City Treasurer, and other concerned parties.

Charlene 3 months...

(From page A25)

here today, is three months pregnant and is expected to have twins in November.

The Inquirer learned this from a source very close to Aga, who himself later confirmed it.

"I'm excited about being a dad and I'm also excited about the wedding," Aga told the INQUIRER yesterday afternoon after a thanksgiving Mass followed by cocktails at Camp John Hay. "I'm excited about everything. People in Manila may be bothered by other events, but we here are happy."

The couple's apparent happiness could not even be clouded by the report that Aga's father, Cheng Muhlach, is not attending the wedding.

Aga and Charlene at first told Cheng the good news about the coming twins. They also told Gonzales' mother Elvie Gonzales, herself a former beauty queen, and Aga's talent manager Ethel Ramos.

Cheng reportedly is snubbing his son's wedding following a falling-out with Ramos. Cheng is said to be blaming Ramos because his family was not included in the wedding preparations.

Cheng reportedly called Ramos an "evil force."

Ramos said that she is planning to file a libel case against Cheng and that some top lawyers have offered her their services.

Aga and Charlene hired Rita Neri of the Wedding Store to plan the event. Ramos denied she had anything to do with the preparations.

"On the day Aga and Charlene told

me about their plan to get married, I already told them I didn't want to have a hand in any of the wedding preparations," Ramos told the INQUIRER yesterday. "I want to be there as a guest. I even told them I didn't want to be one of their principal sponsors, so why is Cheng blaming me?"

Cheng also felt bad when his son reportedly refused to give him two extra invitations to the wedding. That the names of the parents do not appear on the invitation did not help cheer him up.

"Aga and Charlene patterned the invitations after the one which Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones gave away for their wedding," Ramos explained. "Even the names of the principal sponsors and the entire entourage were not on the invitation, but everything will be printed on the missalette for the ceremony."

Ramos said she was given only one invitation and only one seat allocation for the church ceremony and the reception.

Aga's aunt, veteran actress Amalia Fuentes, will also reportedly not attend the wedding. But her daughter, Lielz Sumilang-Martinez, arrived here on Saturday with her actor husband, Albert Martinez, and their three children.

Another cousin, former child star Niño Muhlach, checked in yesterday at the Baguio Country Club, where the bride and the groom are also billeted.

Tight security is in place for the Aga-Charlene wedding.

ABS-CBN has exclusive coverage of the wedding, to be aired as a special.

PCCI holds summit on power

THE PHILIPPINE Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) is holding "The Power Industry Restructuring Summit: Are We Facing Another Power Crisis?" today, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., at the ballroom of the Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati City.

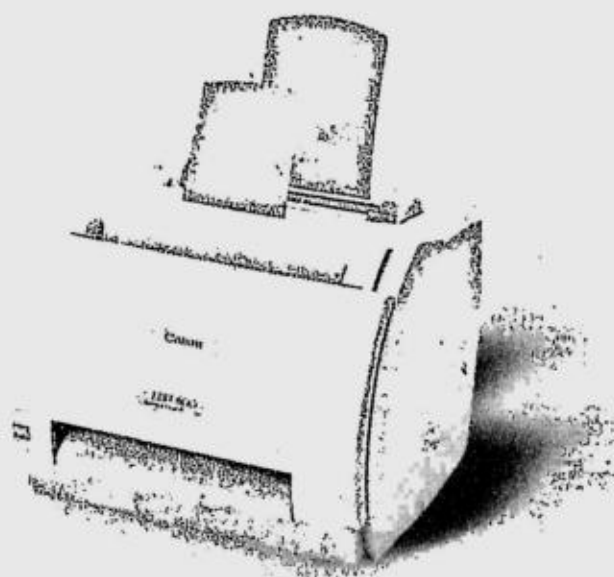
PCCI President Miguel Varela said the summit will tackle the economic repercussions of a possible delay of the enactment of the power reform bill. He cited the massive brownouts that hit the country during the 1990s, affected the competitiveness of local industries and brought great inconveniences to households.

Resource people are Chrysogonus F. Herrera of Power One Corp.; Rodolfo A. Quetun of the Manila Electric Co.; David C. Tan of the Philippine Power

Producers Association; Energy Undersecretary Cyril C. del Callar; former energy secretary Dr. Francisco L. Viray; Waldo N. Darwin of Astrom Power Corp.; Peter D. Garrucho of First Gas Holdings Corp.; Mertan van der Tak of N.M. Rothschild and Sons Ltd.; Geoffrey H. Wilson of Asian Development Bank; Dr. Fernando Y. Roxas of National Power Corp.; party-list Rep. Loretta Ann P. Rosales of Akbayan; Meneleo J. Carlos Jr. of R.I. Chemical Corp.; Pete L. Iliagan of the National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms; and Dr. Allan T. Ortiz of the Economist Intelligence Unit Philippines Inc.

For inquiries, call the PCCI Secretariat at 893-4098, 893-3168, or the Dusit Hotel Nikko at 867-3333.

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Metropolis (Alabang) tel 543.4001 1 BALIKTARAN 2 KAMASUTRA 2001 3 TRAFFIC 4 MASARAP UNANG KAGAT 5 THE MUMMY RETURNS 6 RESERVE 7 DAI AWA SI EBA	Center Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007 1 ANTI TRUST 2 HALIK NG SERENA	FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC tel 930.9515 1 DALAWA SI EBA 2 ACT OF WAR 3 THE MUMMY RETURNS	Spring (Libertad, Pasay City) tel 851.7804 1 MASARAP UNANG KAGAT 2 DALAWA SI EBA	Sunshine (FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376 1 THE MUMMY RETURNS 2 PILAK 3 MASARAP UNANG KAGAT 4 DALAWA SI EBA
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Boob-tube boobooos

HOST: Now that you've retired, is there anything that's keeping you busy?
Guest: Well, I put up a catering business.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Host: That's wonderful! How big is it?
Guest: Well, we can cook up to 100 people! (Ugh!)

Host: Before we close, we'd like to thank our bar host this week.—Randy? He's the owner.
Randy: You're welcome!

Host: You're really one of our best bar hosts!
Randy: Really?
Host: Yes, you and your staff, on hands talaga kayo! (Duh...)

Host: Well, well, what do we have here—a dog?
Guest: Not just a dog, but a hero!
Host: Oh? How come?
Guest: This dog helped in the earthquake held in Athens in 1999!
(You don't hold an earthquake, dum dum. Woof!)

Host: You look so fresh this morning. It's amazing—didn't you work all night last night?
Cohost: Well, we have a show to do—
Host: How do you keep up your energy like this, even without sleep?
Cohost: Well, I recover fast after a highly breakfast!
(Uh, looks like you haven't recovered as completely as you think...)

Host: What have you been doing this summer?
Guest: Oh, malling, going to movies, reading—
Host: Don't you like going outdoors?
It's summer, after all, so is there any sport

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ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	15 MINUTES
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	THE POSSESSED
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	EXIT WOUNDS
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ODEON	MUMMY RETURNS
ODEON-2	KAMASUTRA 2001
ROBEN	DALAWA SA PARAISO NI EVA
TANDEM-1	KUNG LILIGAYA KA
TANDEM-2	ALUPIN NG TUKSO
TIMES	SNATCH BAIT

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ACT-2	KAYAKO PERO MASAKIT
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ACT-4	CLOSED
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CINEMA-2	BALIKTARAN
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CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	EXIT WOUNDS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	MUMMY RETURNS
CINEMA-6	THE POSSESSED
CINEMA-7	SOMEONE LIKE YOU
CINEMA-8	NARING MO NA BA ANG LATEST
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	MUMMY RETURNS
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MUMMY RETURNS
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	TRAFFIC
CINEMA-12	SPY KIDS
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Mel Tiangco says no to politics

BY LEAH SALTERIO

BROADCAST journalists usually are vehement in saying they will not enter politics. Eventually, however, they are convinced to join the political fray.

When Mel Tiangco last Wednesday told a group of entertainment writers that she had no intention of becoming a politician, many tended not to believe her.

"Even when I was with ABS-CBN, I was invited by several political parties to run for public office," Tiangco, anchor of GMA 7's "Front Page" newscast, said during lunch. "But so far, I'm holding on to my word."

Acknowledged as one of the most respected broadcast journal-

ists in the country, Tiangco is the first woman to anchor her own news program, "Frontpage: Ulat ni Mel Tiangco," which airs Mondays to Fridays, 10:30 p.m. on GMA 7.

When told that she could still change her mind and prepare herself for a political career come 2004, Tiangco replied: "But three years is a very short time. If I really want to go into politics, I am prepared. I've been in public service for decades."

"I've been everywhere," she added. "I've slept with the Mangyans and the Igorots, but I don't think I can be a politician."

She said that even if President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo herself would ask her to consider running for public office, Tiangco said she would have to turn down the President.

"I will tell her that I will help the country in another way, in my own capacity," Tiangco said. "I don't want a complicated life. It's easier to sign a check when you're not a politician."

"If we talk of politics as serving the people, I've been there. You can help the people anytime. I can mobilize a mission today or tomorrow if I want to. So why do I still need to go into politics? For popularity or power? I am very popular and I have power. I am not an ego-tripper."

Tiangco, who has chartered an enviable career in Philippine broadcasting, is happy where she is now.

"My heart is for serving the people and I am honest about that. I've gone to great lengths doing that, even without being a politician."

Since "Front Page" premiered in August 1999, Tiangco has been largely instrumental in making it become the leading news program.

"But even if you're a well-known personality doing the newscast, without good news stories, the program is nothing," she said.

Tiangco has scored many firsts in the news program. She did an exclusive interview with former President Joseph Estrada on the first night of his detention in Camp Crame. The 30-minute "Frontpage" had to be extended to one hour.

Tiangco also did a one-on-one with President Macapagal after the latter declared a state of rebellion following the Malacañang siege by Estrada supporters.

"On the night of the (May 14)

elections, our tele-prompter was not working so they made me memorize the newscast," Tiangco recalls. "It was the first time I did it. Our new boss, Manny Pangilinan, was in the studio with his foreign guests so I couldn't afford to make a mistake."

Tiangco recently found herself pinch-hitting for her good friend Winnie Monsod, who left the late-night program "Debate" to run for the Senate.

"It's a little bit late for my career to be pinch-hitting, but I love Mareng Winnie so I didn't mind," Mel says. "Besides, I couldn't say no to my boss Bobby Barreiro. He said, 'We would truly appreciate it if you would take the job.'"

But Tiangco would soon wrap up her "Debate" hosting chores with Oscar Orbos because Monsod, who failed in her senatorial bid, is returning at the end of this month.



TIANGCO. "I am popular and I have power."

Tight security at Aga-Charlene wedding

AS YOU read this column, we will be in Baguio to attend the wedding of Aga Muhlach and Charlene Gonzalez (her last name ends with "z" and not with "s" as most people spell it) which will be held at 3 p.m. today at the St. Joseph's Church in Paddal.

Since President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo leads the list of principal sponsors, security is tight.

Enclosed with the invites are separate security passes for the church and the reception, a car sticker and a card for the guest's confirmed seat.

Kibitzers should think twice before attempting to gate-crash the venue. They can probably get a glimpse of Aga and Charlene, plus the celebrity guests, only outside

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio



the church.

Fans will also not be allowed at the reception at Camp John Hay.

Metropop a success again

THE PRESTIGIOUS Metropop Song Festival 2001, held last Saturday, again displayed the tremendous talents of the Filipino artists.

Now on its 6th year since it resumed in 1996, the festival was the brainchild of the late Antonio

Barreiro, whose legacy is being sustained by his son, Roberto "Bobby" Barreiro, senior vice-president of GMA.

We thought the Metropop had faded into oblivion after the senior Barreiro died. We followed the annual Metropop from the time Martin Nievera became an overnight sensation after interpreting the grand prize-winning entry, "Pain," by Alvin Aileen Sy. The song later became one of the Martin's biggest hits.

So when the Metropop was resurrected by the young Barreiro, we were glad for the competition again which provides a venue for discovering new songwriters and performers.

Jaya started her career by win-

ning the new Metropop, where she interpreted a Veneer Saturno original titled "Sometimes You Know."

Other performers such as Lani Misalucha, Rachel Alejandro, Dessa, Side A and Bituin Escalante also reinforced their status in the music industry by interpreting winning Metropop entries.

"Mr. Bob," as he is fondly called in network circles, is one of the dynamic leaders behind GMA's success these past years.

Metropop is just one of the many projects he has successfully handled for the network.

Congratulations to Metropop for uplifting the Filipino music industry. Congratulations, too, to the winners in this year's competition.

Bites of burger and eat-all-you-can (From page A30)

The restaurant is located on the second level of the building. There's a sign on the side that leads you directly to the stairs.

I was surprised at how big the restaurant was. I was told that further in the back was a dance studio and there was nightly ballroom dancing as well. The buffet was enormous. There was a huge selection of fresh vegetables, rice and noodles. The sauce selection is also the largest I've ever seen here in Manila. There were many recipe suggestions, to the point that I felt *nakakalula* na.

It's eat-all-you-can for just P198. Unbelievable value for money because the beef was of very good quality—tender slices that absorbed the flavors of the sauces so well. I just opt for beef strips and lots of squid.

Kublai's also has very high quality squid, firm without being too rubbery and not at all fishy. The presentation was particularly well thought of. A square wooden tray with a round hole in the middle where the deep bowl fits in perfectly is what you use to gather the ingredients. Unlike other Mongolian buffets that could become messy, the wooden tray catches the spillage.

The food is cooked right before your eyes, but you don't have to worry about smelling like you yourself were grilled since it's all done behind a glass partition. Best of all, I was told that Kublai's is open from 11 a.m. till 10 p.m.

It's also definitely worth the trek to that side of Katipunan because the food is yummy and filling, and you won't go broke in the process even if you treat the entire clan or gang.

Boob-... (From page A28)

you indulge with yourself in? (Well, when you put it that way—no!)

Host: What can you say about all the changes of cheating in the recent elections?

Cohost: Well, you know what they say, the plot gets thicker! (No, they don't say that!)

Host: What is at stake in your bikini competition? Tell us.

Guest: The prize for the winner is 25 pesos in cash!

Host: Your kidding me! (The contestants don't think it's so funny!)

Host: What does it take to join a bikini competition?

Guest: Well, first of all, you have to be able to stand the guts! (Duh, Part Two...)

Host: What can you say about the former president?

Guest: Well, he had his faults, but one thing you have to admit, when he talked to the people, he was a spellbinder! (A—what?!)

On a personal note, one of my best friends turns a year older today.

To Zsa Zsa Padilla, thanks for keeping me grounded yet always encouraging me to soar even higher, for praying with me, laughing with me, sharing your emo-

tions and imparting your wisdom.

Most of all, by your example I know how to value trust and respect, and it's in you that I see that we're all blessed to have within us an infinite capacity to love. "Through the years," my friend.

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ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Bites of burger and eat-all-you-can

MOST women know that having your hair color changed is a tedious, time consuming process. Because I am starting a new show on June 4, bearing the same title as this column, I needed a bit of reinvention. One of the surest ways to highlight a change is to do something drastic with my hair.

KRIS AND TELL

Kris Aquino



a soft, chewy, quite large hamburger bun with oatmeal sprinkled on top. There were lettuce and tomato in the basic burger, but when I took a bite into my Bite Club burger, it was heavenly!

The burger patty was extremely flavorful without being salty. The creamy cheddar cheese was a perfect complement, and the bacon bits were crisp, just the right addition without being overwhelming.

I asked for two drinks to go with my burger, an iced tea and a lemonade. Both seemed to have been blended with ice.

The drinks were very refreshing. The iced tea in particular didn't strike me as being the commercially prepared type, and the lemonade wasn't tart, but sweetened just right.

Bite Club deserves a return visit. It's so good that I'll make the trip even if I won't be in Salon de Manila for any hair beautification. My only complaint is that they only sent catsup with my burger. I'm a mayonnaise fan when it comes to burgers, and I figured since you're going to be sinful, may as well go all the way, right?

Located also on Katipunan, but this time further down, actually almost directly across from Miriam College, is Kublai's. This restaurant is one of the pioneers in serving the Mongolian Buffet, and in fact it started out in Hong Kong where it has consistently been included in the list of best restaurants.

I had tried it in Hong Kong in 1998, but even during my high school days, friends from San Agustin were already raving about Kublai's.

I had a late lunch there last Monday. I had seen the restaurant when I taped an interview in Ateneo a couple of months back, and since I loved Mongolian grill I was really curious if this Katipunan incarnation would live up to its Hong Kong predecessor.

Very basic and very clean-looking presentation. The bread seemed of the same quality as Brothers Burger.

BITES/A29

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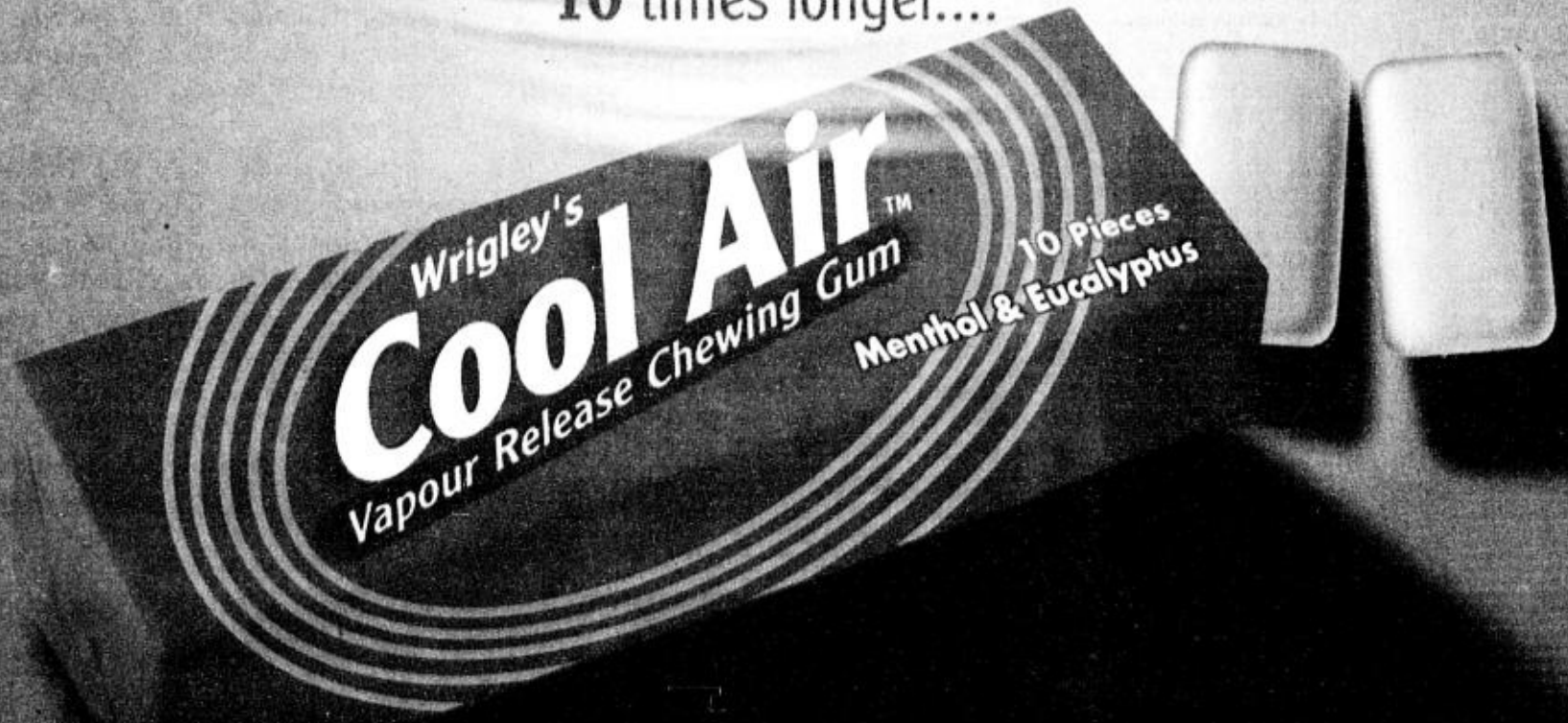


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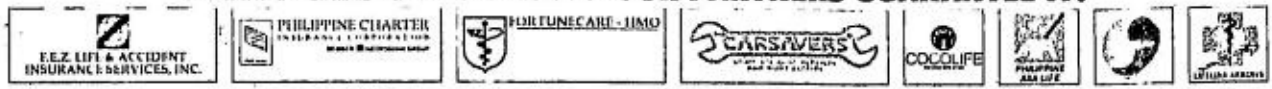
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SMC launches bid to take over Zest-O

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

WITH P43 billion still in its arsenal for mergers and acquisition, San Miguel Corp. is now training its sights on taking control of Zest-O Corp., the country's dominant maker of ready-to-drink juice products.

A top-level company source told the INQUIRER that Zest-O was on the list of San Miguel's shortlist of takeover targets. The same source said initial discussions have already started but details of the deal have yet to be firmed up.

Zest-O, which started operations in 1981, conquered the ready-to-drink juice market by selling affordable juice drinks in doypacks compared to the pricey brands sold in brick packs. The company claims to have an 80-percent stranglehold on the market with the balance shared by other players that include Magnolia and Zip fruit juice drinks.

The ambitious firm has likewise dared to tread on the giant's toes by introducing its own cola and orange soda line. Aside from its flagship brand, Zest-O also owns or

ange drinks Sunglo, Plus and Big, and instant noodle maker Quikchow.

This planned acquisition will give San Miguel full market control of all key non-alcoholic beverage products in the country—from soft drinks (Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc.) to bottled water (La Tondeña Distillers Inc., Viva Mineral Water and Wilkins Distilled Water) and powdered juice drinks (Sugarland's Eight O'clock).

San Miguel regained control of Coke Philippines this year through

a \$1.2-billion shares swap deal with Coca-Cola Amatil of Australia, reversing a similar deal made in 1997.

San Miguel now has a 60-percent interest in Coke Philippines with the balance owned by The Coca-Cola Co. of Atlanta. In exchange for a lower stake in the joint venture (San Miguel had battled for a 70-percent share), the Coca-Cola Co. reportedly gave a discount on the royalties or cost of concentrate charged to San Miguel which can use the discount to further enhance the bottler's operations.

Through its 64-percent-owned subsidiary La Tondeña, San Miguel bought in 1999 Metro Bottled Water Inc. from Metro Pacific Corp. to consolidate its holding in the fast-growing bottled water business. Last year, San Miguel took control of Sugarland from its founder Dante Y. Go who successfully built Eight O'clock into the leading powdered juice drink in the country despite formidable competition from Tang juice drinks.

The Zest-O takeover plan would dovetail San Miguel's current strategy of consolidating all the non-li-

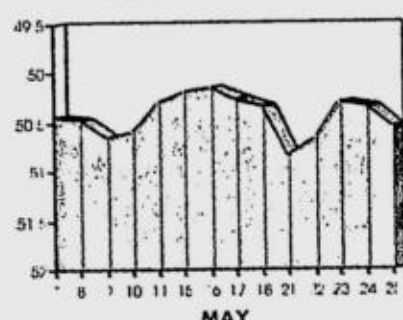
quor business of La Tondeña into Coke Philippines. San Miguel and the Coca-Cola Co. recently paid \$141 million to La Tondeña for the water and juice businesses which comprise 27 percent of the company's total revenues.

The source said San Miguel and the Coca-Cola Co. are planning to spin off a new company that will house all of their non-carbonated drinks. This will include Coke's Minute Maid and Hi-C brands, Sugarland's Eight O'clock and Ponkan, and La Tondeña's Viva and Wilkins brands.

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CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



Peso-Dollar Rate

P 50.545 = \$1
As of 5 p.m.,
May 25, 2001

Y 120.38 = \$1
The US dollar was trading
at 120.38 as of 5 p.m.,
May 25, 2001

GOLD: \$279.60/280.10
per ounce Hong Kong,
May 25, 2001

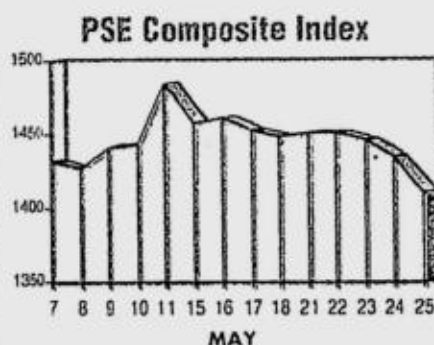
Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US\$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.166725	1.000000	50.2870
Japan	Yen	0.009733	0.008342	0.4195
United Kingdom	Pound	1.643682	1.408800	70.8443
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.149586	0.128210	6.4473
Switzerland	Franc	0.656275	0.562493	28.2861
Canada	Dollar	0.754283	0.646496	32.5103
Singapore	Dollar	0.648195	0.555568	27.9378
Australia	Dollar	0.604239	0.517893	26.0433
Bahrain	Dinar	3.094926	2.652661	133.3944
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.311135	0.266674	13.4102
Brunei	Dollar	0.646027	0.553710	27.8444
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000103	0.000088	0.0044
Thailand	Baht	0.025694	0.022022	1.1074
UAE	Dirham	0.317700	0.272301	13.6932
Korea	Won	0.000909	0.000779	0.0392
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.857100	43.1010
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.438228	22.0372
France	Franc	0.152450	0.130664	6.5707
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.388935	19.5584
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.062288	3.1323
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.021247	1.0684
Italy	Lire	0.000517	0.000443	0.0223
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.144154	7.2491
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004275	0.2150
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.005151	0.2590
Luxembourg	Franc	0.024789	0.021247	1.0684
Ireland	Punt	1.269739	1.088293	54.7270

STOCK MARKET

Shares lower

STOCKS ended down Friday as some foreign brokerages offloaded shares to bring their portfolios in line with the new country weighting in Morgan Stanley Capital International's (MSCI) indices, traders said.

They added that an absence of news kept trading quiet with activity dominated by a large cross transaction of 69 million shares in Ayala Corp. The block contributed just over half the total turnover.



(See stock market report on Page B3)

Reuters

PCCI to host power industry summit

THE PHILIPPINE Chamber of Commerce and Industry is holding a Power Industry Restructuring Summit today at the ballroom of Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati City.

The summit is divided into five modules: A review of the Omnibus Power Bill; A historical review of the

Philippine power crisis; The financial challenges affecting the power restructuring; Technology and environmental challenges affecting power restructuring; and Presentation of key proposals for the implementing rules and regulations of the bill passed.

We've identified several hotspots all over the country.

Dagupan, Lipa, Iloilo and Cagayan de Oro. Key areas that will welcome the F.O.R.C.E. from June 1-3, 2001.

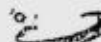


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ONGOING TALKS

MWSS may take over west zone concession

By CHRISTINE A. GAYLICAN

THE METROPOLITAN Waterworks and Sewerage System will take over the west zone concession of Maynilad Water Services Inc. if negotiations with the Lopez group over its non-payment of concession fees and overdue accounts would fail.

The dispute between the water regulatory agency and the Lopez-owned Maynilad has forced MWSS to prepare a takeover plan as an alternative, said an official of MWSS.

"This is just a contingency measure. In any organization, one must think ahead and prepare for eventualities whenever problems arise. But negotiations are still ongoing. Both parties have not given up," he said.

Maynilad and the MWSS-Regulatory Office went to the negotiating table after the Macapagal administration has recently turned down the petitions of the water concessionaires (Maynilad and Manila Water Co. Inc.) for an automatic currency rate adjustment (Cera) mechanism that will allow them to adjust rates when there are cost increases.

Maynilad, which is more persistent in pushing for an automatic Cera because of the debts it inherited from the old MWSS, is going through negotiations with the MWSS before it elevates its plea to the International Chamber of Commerce next month.

Maynilad is a joint venture between the Lopez group and Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux of France.

Maynilad has stopped paying the \$800 million in foreign debts it inherited from the old MWSS passing on the burden to the government which guaranteed the loans.

The government, through the water regulatory agency, had planned to tap the \$200-million bond posted by Maynilad for the loan servicing. However, Maynilad was able to secure a temporary restraining order from the Court of Appeals which kept MWSS from "touching" the bond.

The government negotiating panel is composed of the MWSS Regulatory Office, the Department of Finance and the National Economic and Development Authority.

Neda Director General Dante B. Canlas said in another interview that the panel has been waiting for Maynilad's final offer.

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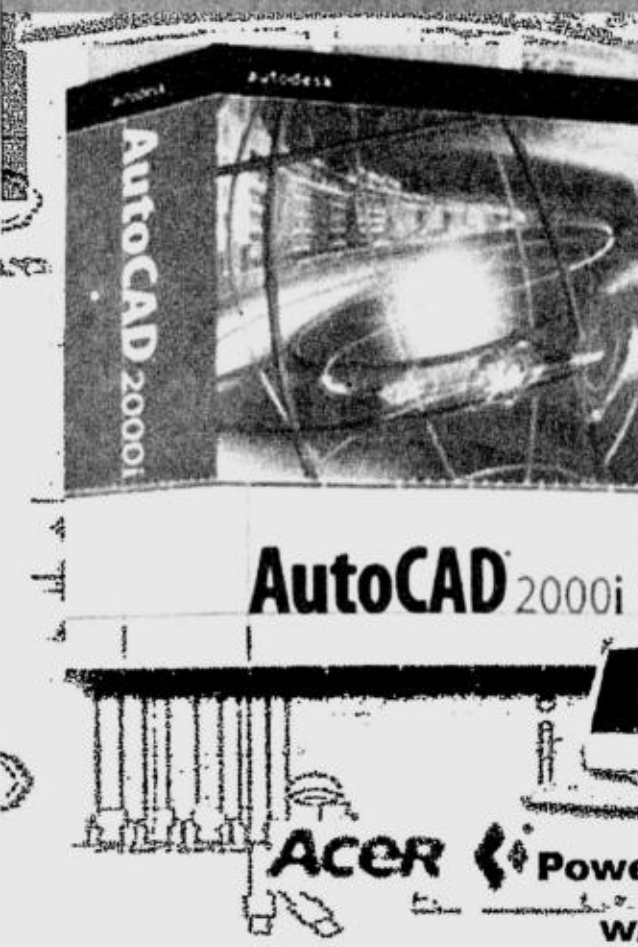
Entrance exams will be held on June 2 and June 9, 9am to 12nn at ACB Room 502 of UA&P's ACB Building.

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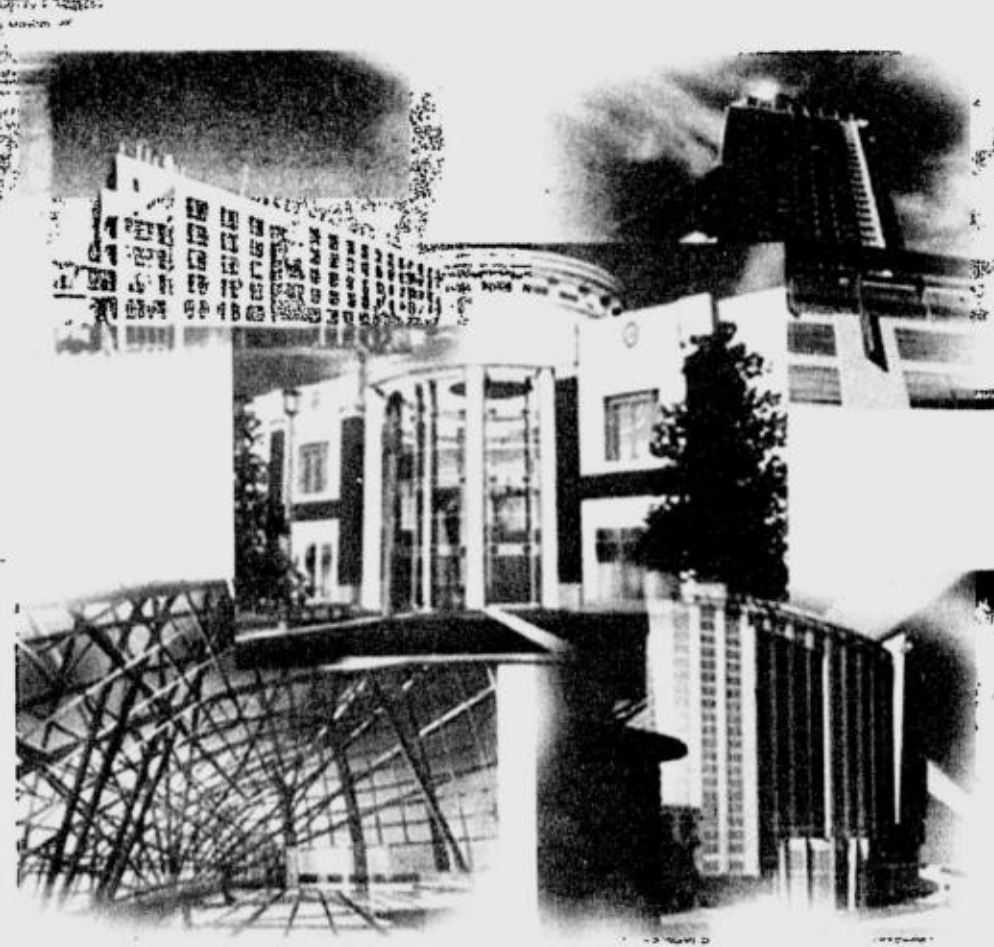


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Pole deal

EASTERN Telecommunications Philippines Inc. and the Manila Electric Co. recently signed a Joint Pole Agreement renewal.

The agreement is binding for a period of three years. It allows the mutual use of both parties' poles in Makati, Parañaque, Taguig, Pasay and Calubang Areas. This will enable both ETPI and Meralco to save on their capital expenditures for the year.

ETPI COO Angelo Molato, with AVP for outside plant Tom Enriquez and outside plant O&M manager Valentin Dorado Jr. signed the agreement for ETPI. Signatories for Meralco were Jaime Camacho (senior AVP and telecommunications head), Bernardo Imperial (senior superintendent) and Al Siccion (superintendent).

Expansion

ENTERWORKS Inc., a provider of business process and real-time content integration solutions for e-marketplaces anti-supplier enablement, has opened an international office, the Philippines Development Center.

Initially designed as a testing facility, the center will accelerate the time-to-market for development of Enterworks products, and serve as Enterworks' Asia-Pacific sales and marketing hub. Enterworks is developing an Asia-Pacific customer base in part through strategic alliances with global partners, including Sterling Commerce and GE Global Exchange.

Leadership award

AT&T is holding its seventh annual AT&T Leadership Award program designed to give financial support to students from Asia-Pacific countries studying in the United States. AT&T also announced the names of the students who won the 2000 AT&T Leadership Awards, including two students from the Philippines.

For the 2001 Leadership Awards, 30 awards of \$4,000 will be made available for students from Australia, the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.

Award winners will be selected based on academic standing and standardized test scores, such as university entrance examinations and the GMAT, and on a short essay that applicants are required to prepare.

Industry leader
SHARP (Phil.) Corp. expects to maintain its lead in the color television (CTV) category in the Philippines this year, in spite of the current economic difficulties.

"From our total market share of around 20 percent in calendar year 2000 in the CTV category, we hope to increase our share to 30 percent by the end of 2001 and pull away further from our rivals," said Koji Domoto, Sharp assistant vice president for domestic sales.

Domoto revealed that for the first quarter of 2001, Sharp had registered a significant increase in market share for the CTV category, pulling in 22.4 percent of total industry sales, based on Sharp's volume of 43,121 units sold from January to March, over an estimated 192,000 units sold by the entire industry.

In the conventional cathode ray tube (CRT) CTV sub-category, Sharp had a commanding 25.6 percent market share in the first quarter. This was based on the company's sales figure of 42,425 units.



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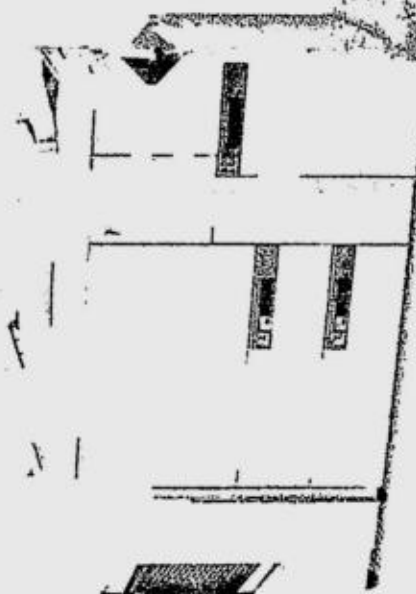
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ON THE MONEY

John Mangun



PRICES at the Philippine Stock Exchange fell again on Friday, showing the way to the next bottom around 1350. A fall below 1350 targets the technical trading gap at 1300 but that really is no big deal. I mean another 7-percent drop is not going to be that significant in monetary terms. We have much bigger problems to tackle.

One story that attracted some attention in the financial press last week was the fact that investment banking giant, Morgan Stanley, re-evaluated its weighting of world stock markets. The Philippines was reduced to 0.5 percent of its portfolio. Yet another reason why the stock market is down. Right?

There was a spate of hand wringing and a little whining. Comments followed such as the government is not doing enough to build confidence with the foreign money. The foreigners are concerned with the slow count of the election returns. The foreigners are upset that former President Joseph Estrada is being treated too nicely. The foreigners are concerned that we have not passed the Omnibus Power Bill.

It seems as if you cannot pick up a newspaper or turn on the television without hearing that the "foreigners" do not think the Philippines is good for investment. We read a headline about

an event like the attack by robbers at the Pearl Farm resort and immediately some comment is made that this will hurt foreign investments. How many times have you heard something like this: "The foreigners are not going to invest unless..." and here you can fill in your own solution.

I suppose I am as guilty as every other commentator (which should really be called "opinionator") who has been giving unsolicited advice to the current administration these last few months about what to do regarding the "foreigners."

Then I started looking back at some of the things that have been written in the international press about the Philippines over the past year. I was surprised how much there is in the archives of major international publications. What I found was that the Philippines is the country everyone loves to hate.

When we did not take the "suggestions" of the World Bank, IMF, ADB, we were "on the wrong track." When we took their suggestions, we had "implementation problems." If we do something not "suggested," (and this is a direct quote) "It was another example of 'Philippine style' that probably will not be successful again." I won't bore you with other examples, but I hope you get the idea.

My conclusion, after reading all these articles, is that it is not going to matter much in the medium term what we do. The foreigners are not going to buy us out of the economic doldrums. We are going to have to do it ourselves, as is rightly so.

The unfortunate and disturbing thing that I see is that it appears that there is little enthusiasm, particularly in the business community, to do it ourselves.

Here we are with some of the lowest interest rates in the last 10 years, yet no one is borrowing money from the banks. We have a stock market with companies reaching three-year high in profits and three-year low in share prices. We have large companies reducing capital expenditures to levels that are barely enough to keep the company alive. And all the time, we are worrying about building confidence with the foreigners who have no vested interest in the Philippines and who could not care less. Of course, foreign investment is important to our economy. However, if you think this foreign

money is going to enter these shores while the locals sit on the sidelines, you are sadly and foolishly mistaken.

What the Macapagal administration ought to do is to try to figure out why Filipino money is not investing in the Philippines and trying to build that level of confidence. The government needs to be pro-active here and not abroad.

On a personal basis, President Macapagal-Arroyo has to make it clear that she does not owe anybody anything. One newspaper in its editorial last week said, "For heaven's sake, give her a break" and I agree with that sentiment. A major criticism against former President Estrada was that he returned too many political favors. Edsa II was supposed to usher in a new beginning and we are back to harping and carping.

A government has to remain confident in order to inspire confidence. And the people have to be confident in that government in order for it to remain confident. It is a chicken and egg situation.

The government should lessen the emphasis on the politically correct "economic reforms" and focus on economic priorities. There is plenty of available cash in this country for investment and the government must take the lead in directing that investment to bolster the economy. This is not the time for a "do all" approach. This is a time for clear and direct emphasis on even a single major project. Build the rail system between Manila and Laguna. Or turn Clark into the major Asian tourist destination is ought to be. Right now this country needs an economic rallying point that big and small businesses can get behind and get on board with their money. Forget about incentives for the foreigners. Give the economic incentives to the Filipinos.

There must be more public dialogue between business and the government. I hope we see more open public forums between the various departments and all sizes of business about what business needs and what government is able to provide. Every Cabinet official should be meeting publicly with business people to discuss ways how each one can help the other to get this economy growing at a faster rate. It seems like the only business people who are listened to are those who wear five hundred-dollar shoes and Saville Row suits. The only time you see government officials at the grass-roots level is when they are campaigning. The election is over and now we need to get back to business.

It is time to stop worrying about foreign business confidence and start encouraging Filipino business confidence.

(John Mangun can be reached at 636-1121 to 35, Fax No. 634-2349 or e-mail at johnmangun@yahoo.com.)

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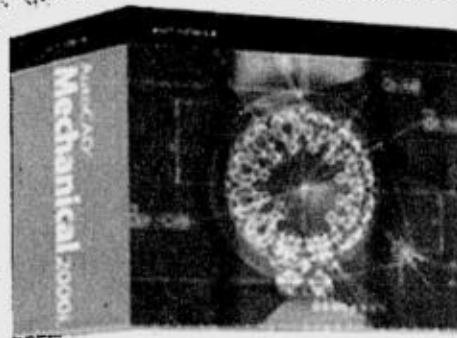
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Kiss Kissa good-bye

CLARISSA "Kissa" Ocampo, the head of the trust department of Equitable-PCIBank who provided eyewitness testimony during the impeachment hearings that Jose Velarde and Joseph Estrada are one and the same, is set to leave E-PCIB for good.

According to the grapevine, Ocampo, who was retained as consultant after she availed herself of the bank's early retirement program earlier this year, is set to leave for the United States any time now for a long, unstructured holiday.

Meanwhile, her former bosses who also left the bank in a huff, president Wilfredo Vergara and his executive vice president, Edilberto Javier, are said to be going into a micro-finance venture after they shall have unleashed their long pent-up, career-related frustrations over flocks of migrating ducks in the wilds of Bulacan and Mindoro.

Failing that, the two avid duck hunters will practice target-shooting, with the caricatures of a few Chinoys pasted on the cardboard targets. The last statement is an adulterated scuttlebutt, of course.

Misfires

• TWO J. Walter Thompson executives who were recently dismissed by the new expatriate president have filed a P277-million illegal dismissal suit against the American advertising giant.

Rey Mendoza was a client service director of the ad agency while Jocelyn Mendoza-Galera, Mendoza's sister, was president of Mindshare Philippines until they were given the pink slips as Christmas presents by Mark Webster, president and managing director of the local J. Walter

COCKTALES

By Victor C. Agustin



Thompson Manila.

• THE FORMER general manager of the Highland Citrus Corp., the Itogon, Benguet farm owned by former Trade Minister Roberto Ongpin, denied the claim made by Ongpin that he had been fired for dishonesty.

The former GM, George Cardos, said he quit the Ongpin farm because of "internal management problems which I will elaborate in due time and in the proper forum."

"In my one year and seven months' stay in the said farm, I was able to increase/double the sales compared to the previous administration's," Cardos said. He also denied the Ongpin allegation that he was "in cahoots" with the landowner of an adjoining three-hectare property—whose ownership is being contested—that was raided by Ongpin's men and forcibly occupied at gunpoint.

Cardos, a member of class 1983 of the Philippine Military Academy, now works for the Land Transportation Office as a technical assistant.

• AFTER failing to recruit former Finance Undersecretary Joel Banares because of statutory limitations, All Asia Capital is now trying to entice a corporate lawyer, Roy Rafols, to be-

come president of the once aggressive, now severely undercapitalized investment house.

30-minute wonder

EARLY this month, we renewed our expired driver's license at the Malate branch of the Land Transportation Office. Guess how long it took us to receive a replacement license? Thirty minutes!

Let's see now, the last time we did the three-year routine, it took more than four months and two additional follow-up trips before the license was finally released.

COCKTALES/ B6

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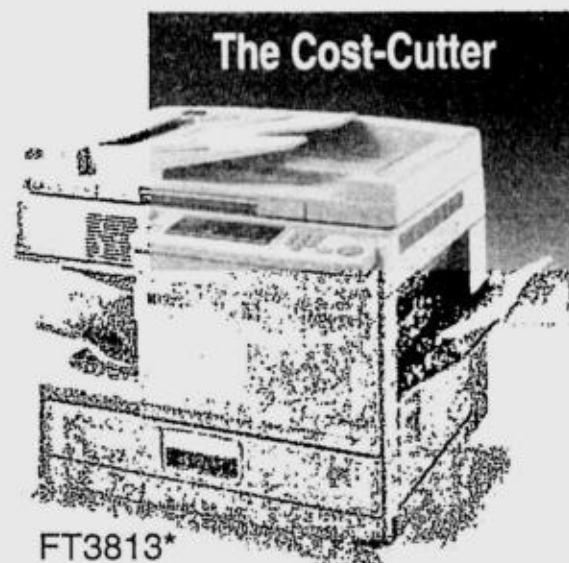
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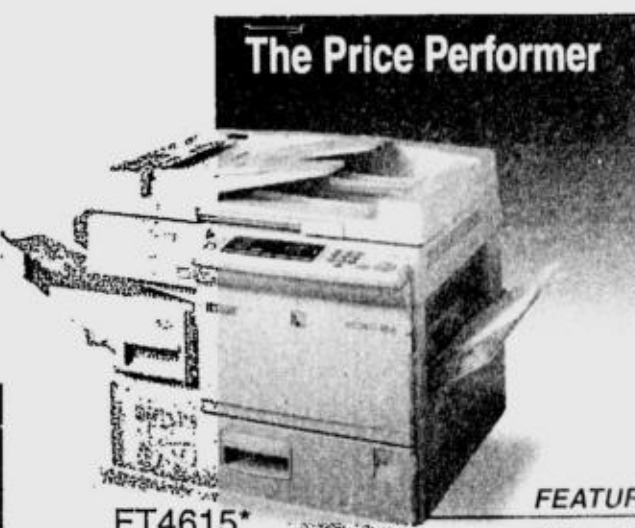
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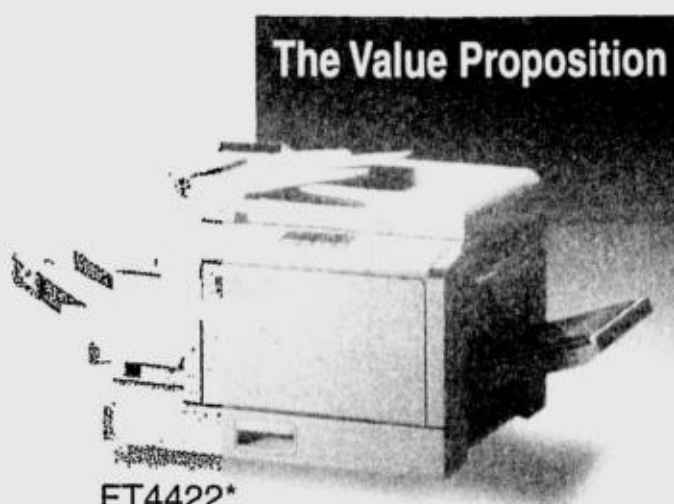
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LRTA given one year to secure P10-B loan

BY ELENA R. TORRIJOS

THE NATIONAL Economic Development Authority's Investment Coordination Committee has given the Light Rail Transit Authority another year to finalize a P10.5-billion loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

The ICC, tasked to review government projects for financing, had earlier given LRTA and the Department of Transportation and Communication up to June this year to secure the loan, which was meant to fund line 2 of LRT II which will cover the Pasig-Cubao-Santolan route.

Neda public investment staff director Rolando Tungpalan said that the ICC, chaired by Neda director general and Socio Economic Planning Secretary Dante Canlas, approved the extension because the LRTA assured the committee that there would be no further delay in the project since it had already addressed right-of-way issues.

The project should have been finalized last December but the schedule was disrupted due to the right-of-way issues. Given the deadline, the LRT II project is expected to be fully operational by 2004 with partial operations to start in 2003.

Meanwhile, the ICC has also given the go-

ahead to the Supreme Court for its planned P607-million loan from the Japanese government. The loan will be used to put up the Philippine Judicial Academy, a training center to be located in Tagaytay.

The ICC also extended by one-year the time given for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to get funding for the National Integrated Protected Areas project.

The ICC is expected to endorse its approval of the projects to the Neda board next week.

Aside from clearing government projects for financing, the ICC has been reviewing and re-evaluating projects that require extension of closing dates and that have incurred over-runs to ensure that whatever problems besetting these projects were being properly resolved.

Government has said it was inclined not to entertain new official development assistance if this would present an added burden to the government. Instead, it would focus on accelerating counterpart funding disbursements for existing ODA projects, she said.

Government is currently grappling with the low disbursement rates of P10.2 billion worth of ODA.



AYALA'S E-COMMERCE STRATEGY

Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II (extreme right) and Fernando Zobel de Ayala (second from left) lead Ayala Corp.'s strategy team that also includes (from left) Mark Anthony N. Javier, Jonathan R. Madrid, Jose Teodoro K. Limcaoco, Gerardo C. Ablaza Jr., Gerardo B. Amisola and Delfin Lazaro. The conglomerate swept the Asia's Best Companies 2001 survey of Finance Asia, the leading information source on Asian financial market, winning the top spot in all four categories: Best Managed Company, Best E-Commerce Strategy, Best in Investor Relations and Most Committed to Shareholder Value.

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SQ 208	Auditor/Lead Auditor Training for ISO 9001:2000 QMS (IRCA Registration No.)	18-22 June 23-27 July 20-24 August
SQ 209	Advanced Quality Management System Auditing Skills	14-15 June 16-17 August
SQ 210	Quality Management Representatives' Skills Development	28-29 June (CEBU) 05-06 July
SQ 211	Training Needs Analysis	09-10 August
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RFM finalizing sale of 34% stake in PSi

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

FOOD and beverage conglomerate RFM Corp. is finalizing the sale of its remaining 34-percent stake in semiconductor subsidiary PSi Technologies Holdings Inc. for about \$40 million.

Sources said RFM had tapped US investment bank JP Morgan Chase to broker the sale of the 4.725 million PSi shares.

The sale, which will also cover \$850 million worth of convertible bonds maturing on May 30, is expected to be finalized within the next few days.

It was earlier reported that RFM's partners in the subsidiary, Merrill Lynch Direct Investment Group and Nomura/Jafco that own 13 percent and 16 percent of PSi Tech, respectively, were keen on buying out the RFM group.

However, other sources privy to the negotiations said JP Morgan Chase was also considering other offers not necessarily limited to the two minority partners.

But since the proceeds from the sale of PSi, which was the first Philippine company to list on the technology-heavy Nasdaq Stock Exchange, will cover only half of the cost of its maturing obligations, the sources said RFM was trying to raise more resources.

RFM, sources said, was also currently working out a bridge financing arrangement using shares in its cash cow, Cosmos Bottling Corp., as collateral. This soft drink unit, which has impressed investors due to its ability to expand market share despite the political and economic uncertainties, posted a 44-percent increase in net income in the first quarter on the back of 28-

percent growth in sales.

Another option being considered by RFM is to sell its tuna and flour businesses and Swift Foods Inc.

RFM officials are hopeful that the company will be able to come up with enough funds to cover its maturing obligations this week, amid concerns that it might end up defaulting on these debts.

Meanwhile, PSi is a focused independent semiconductor assembly and test service provider to the power semiconductor market. It provides comprehensive package design, assembly and test services for semiconductors used in telecommunications and networking systems, computer peripherals, consumer electronics, electronic office equipment, automotive systems and industrial products.

PSi caters to semiconductor manufacturers that wish to outsource their products in order to reduce production cost. Among its major customers are eight of the world's largest semiconductor device manufacturers such as Phillips, ON Semiconductors (formerly Motorola's Semiconductor group), International rectifiers, Infineon, Fairchild Korea (formerly Samsung) and ST Microelectronics.

RFM first invested in PSi as a minority owner in the late 1980s when it was still known as Pacific Semiconductors Inc. It became a majority owner in 1995. Under Concepcion and a seasoned team of semiconductor industry veterans led by PSi president Arthur Young Jr., the company was nurtured to become one of the world's leaders in power semiconductor assembly and test services.

Cocktales ...

(From page B5)

We cannot help but express elation and pride at the LTO's new-found speed because only last month, we accompanied a friend in renewing her US driver's license right in downtown Manhattan.

Do you know how long the average wait at the New York's Department of Motor Vehicles is? Two and a half hours!

And because of the daily queues, the DMV could not release replacement licenses on same day-applications; instead, like all the rest, the new licenses are mailed to the respective applicants' listed addresses, for an average of seven to 10 days' wait.

Heard through the grapevine

IN AN attempt to deodorize their ousted board, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile and his Marcos-Estrada cronies in the sequestered Philcomsat have jettisoned Erap lawyer Edward Serapio and a Jaime Dichaves nominee from their lineup.

In their stead, the Enrile-Africa-Benedicto-Poblador faction is now asking Malacañang to appoint banker Leonilo Coronel and pre-neo executive Francisco Colayco as government nominees to the Philcomsat stockholders' meeting.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

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The lowdown on those SSS losses

LAST week, the INQUIRER ran a story by Jerry Esplanada that, on orders of former chair Carlos Arellano, the Social Security System set up early last year a credit line of P7.4 billion with Landbank, Philhealth and First Metro Investments.

A credit line is a common banking facility. A client is allowed to draw money from a bank up to the maximum amount allowed, called the credit line, anytime he needs to. The client pays the loan, or any part of it, anytime he wants to. The credit line is like a checking account except that the money you are drawing is not yours, but is a loan from the bank. The line is almost always backed up by solid collateral.

The credit line set up by the SSS was to take care of "liquidity problems." And the SSS drew against the line to the full limit of P7.4 billion. To the layman, this means there was not enough cash to pay for current expenses. What the hell was going on?

At the SSS, expenses consist of benefit payments and operating costs. Income is derived from members' contributions and investment earnings. But part of your contributions is set aside in the investment reserve fund for your retirement. This reserve fund is not supposed to be used for operations; otherwise, you may not have anything to retire on. This reserve is invested and is the source of investment earnings.

But when benefit payments for a particular year exceed contributions, there are no reserves to set aside to be invested, at least for that year. For example, in 2000, benefit payments outstripped contributions by about P100 million. Yet, since 1999, SSS was investing heavily in the stock market, notably P7.5 billion on the Equitable PCI Bank deal. My guess is that the portion of the contributions that was supposed to be used for current needs, such as benefit payments and overhead, were diverted to all those crony investments resulting in the liquidity problem. And so, for the first time in its 44-year history, the SSS had to take out a short-term loan, a whopping P7.4 billion. As it turned out, it was a stopgap measure as the loan had already been paid.

Even the best of companies suffer an occasional cash short-

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General



age caused by any number of factors: a drop in sales and collections or a severe warehouse fire. Sometimes, the company simply wants to take advantage of a wonderful investment opportunity that has presented itself. As the cash flow improves, the loan is paid. Some companies have a stand-by credit line to serve as a buffer to these sudden surges for cash.

Faced with the liquidity problem, the SSS could have sold some assets. Instead, it borrowed against its portfolio of government securities with a return higher than the interest rate on the credit line. During the term of the loan, SSS earned on those securities P1.603 million as against P1.342 million in interest. The net to SSS is P260.9 million.

Yeah, right. But this explains only the solution to the liquidity problem. It does not explain how the liquidity problem came about in the first place.

In the end, it should be made clear whether the liquidity problem was simply a cash flow problem where the need for cash suddenly went out of sync in relation to actual cash inflow. But in an operation like SSS, cash inflow and outflow are pretty much predictable and programmable. A cash shortage of P7.4 billion could not have been accidental.

But if the liquidity problem was because billions of members' money are locked up in all those crony investments during the Estrada presidency, then it is a different problem altogether. This means that part of the contributions that should normally have gone to pay for benefits and overhead went to those lousy investments, resulting in the liquidity problem. An investigation will have to be conducted to determine any criminal liability.

The new management should clean the mess. And the next time we hear of a liquidity problem, I hope it means there is not enough soft drinks at the SSS canteen.

DTI reaffirms AUV support

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has reaffirmed its full commitment to the development of Asian utility vehicles for export with its recent decision to put a roadblock to further shipments of vehicles assembled abroad.

Trade Secretary Manuel "Mar" Roxas II said the policy to stop semi-knocked down imports was aimed at putting more focus on the promotion of AUV lines as the country's identi-

fied export niche in the world market. Roxas said AUVs had a higher local content that would provide more employment and buying power for the country.

The Macapagal administration last week rejected the applications of Ford Motor Co. Philippines Inc. and Auto Prominence Corp. to get preferred duties on SKD imports, which are essentially complete vehicles without tires and batteries.

Malacañang has adopted the Board of Investments' recommendation to reject all pending and future SKD appli-

cations to encourage vehicle makers to sell more locally assembled units, such as AUVs, which extensively use locally made automotive parts.

Among all locally assembled vehicles, AUVs use the most locally made parts with their local content in excess of 50 percent, with most significant body parts, except for the engine, manufactured in the country.

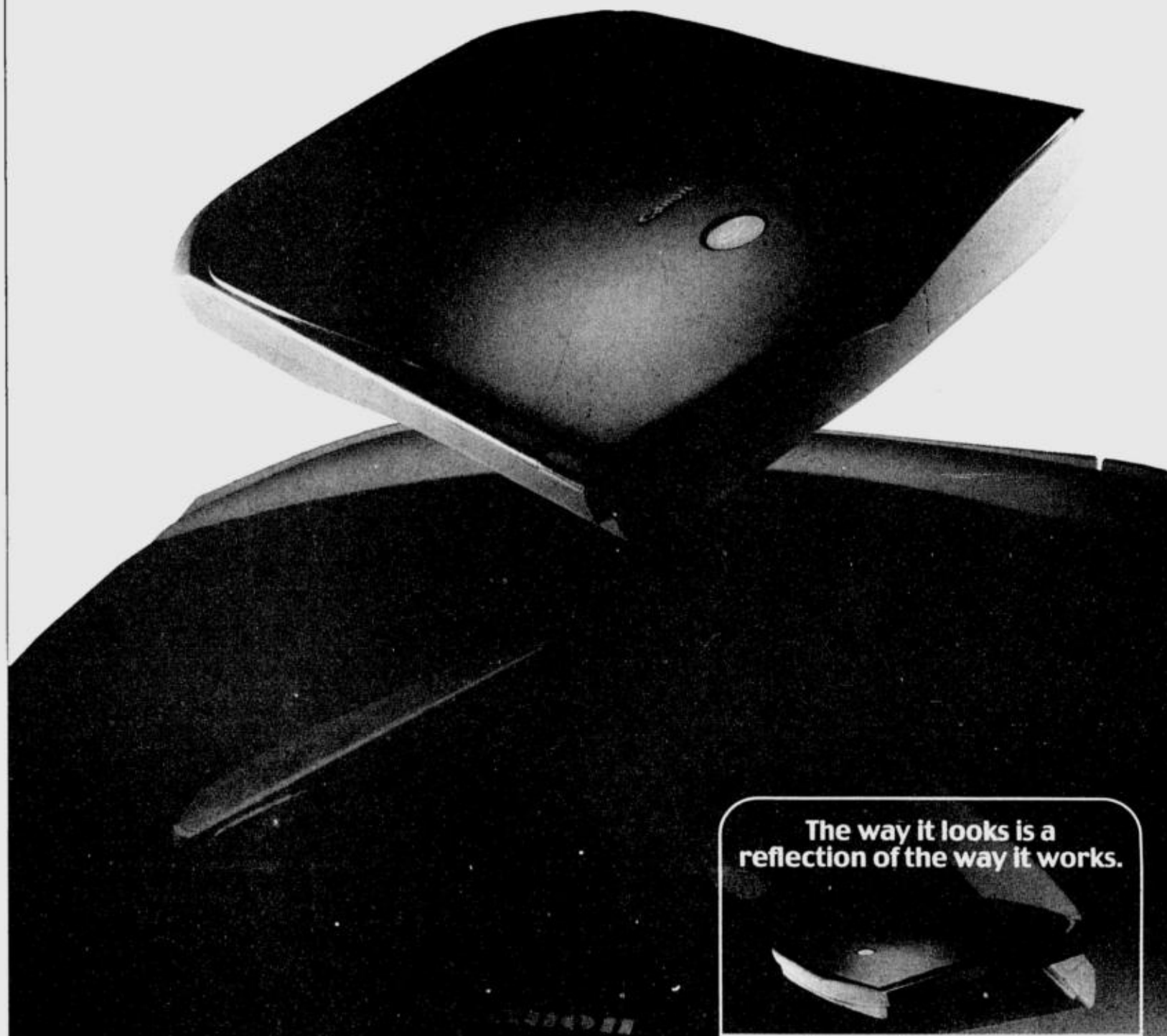
The AUV concept was widely seen to have begun with the original version of the Toyota Tamaraw in the 1970s. The concept was imported and fur-

ther enhanced in other countries in Southeast Asia.

AUVs have been credited for saving the industry from total collapse in the last three years as they sustained robust sales through the ill effects of the 1997 financial crisis. Last year, AUV sales surged 18 percent to 55,136 units from 46,847 units the previous year.

The current AUV models in the country are Toyota Motor Philippines Corp.'s Tamaraw Revo, Mitsubishi Motor Philippines Corp.'s Adventure and Isuzu Philippines Corp.'s Hi-Lander.

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Petron to raise output in line with new tack

LOCAL refining giant Petron Corp. said it would run at 90 percent of its total capacity of 180,000 barrels a day in two to three months. The oil firm is currently producing only 70 percent of its total capacity.

Petron vice president for refining Alfredo Trio told reporters Petron's decision to raise production was in line with its tack of shifting more sales volume to the export market.

Petron officials said their strategy to penetrate the export market had given Petron healthier margins than it could get from local sales.

The Philippine Institute of Petroleum reported that as of the end of the first quarter, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. had dislodged Petron as the country's biggest oil firm.

Shell reported a market share of 38.3 percent against Petron's 37 percent.

"The loss of market share does not mean loss in profit," Trio stressed.

He said Petron exported whatever products it could not sell "economically" in the local market.

He said 12.6 percent of Petron's to-

tal sales revenues in peso terms for 2000 came from the overseas market.

This represented 17.7 percent of the oil firm's total sales volume in the same year, he said.

On the other hand, he said exporting their products would remain as an option as the market was very volatile and complicated.

Trio said Petron relied mainly on traders in selling their products and direct transactions were unusual.

Petron had been exporting part of its total product volume for the past 15 years.

These products include naphtha, diesel, industrial fuel oil, reformate and mixed xylene.

He said most of Petron's exports went to Japan, Korea and China.

In an earlier statement, Petron chair Jose Syjuco expressed confidence in the "inherent advantage" the firm had in terms of refining capacity and distribution network.

"As margins normalize in the domestic market, we will regain the top market position," Syjuco said.

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Stock investors seen taking cue from fate of power bill

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

LOCAL stocks will be volatile this week with some upside potential once Congress is able to pass the Omnibus Power Bill during a special session set to begin today.

The market is also awaiting the release of the country's first-quarter economic growth performance on Thursday. The consensus is

that the gross domestic product growth rate will be at a slower 2.5 percent. The government's target is 3 percent.

Figures released by the National Statistics Office on Friday showed that the country's manufacturing volume fell for the third consecutive month by 2 percent in March.

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 2.65 percent week-on-week to close at 1,410.23 on Friday.

AB Capital and Investment Corp. analyst Jose Vistan said brokers were trading cautiously last week ahead of the special session on the Omnibus Power Bill. Traders were also keeping an eye on the health of the economy and a murky political landscape.

"Some investors are worried that the special session may be fruitless as some senators, especially the reelectionists who are losing in the official count, may turn it into a circus. No single piece of corporate or economic news could fuel market activity as most of the selling came on a week when there were very few major earnings or economic data," he said.

Vistan said the market would take its cue from economic reports and political developments this week, specifically the special congressional session on the Omnibus Power Bill.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is pushing hard to make sure this bill becomes a law before the next presidential elections in 2004. The government is hoping that the bill's approval by Congress will cut domestic power rates and entice foreign investors to again place their bets in the Philippines.

Most senators, however, believe this bill can best be tackled by the next Congress.

"For this week, we expect a tug-of-war between short- and long-term players, which should create a slight increase in volatility heading into the second-quarter reporting season. Investors' sentiments remained mixed as companies are still suffering the effects of a slow economy. That will continue to stall stock prices and in turn make investors hesitant about bigger commitments to the market," Vistan said.

He said the Phisix was moving well within its intermediate downtrend channel after a failed breakout.

"We remain quite cautious on the overall health of the market, particularly on blue-chip issues that encountered some selling pressure late last week. Initial support is seen at the psychological level of 1,400, while the main support is at 1,380. The support levels should hold as the market has shown some underlying strength due to investors' view of a better economy for next year," Vistan said.

Internet stock firm 2tradeasia.com said investors would try to weigh the index's staying power above the immediate 1,400 support level today. In case of selling bouts, it said the next support target was at 1,370.

"The local bourse might be hard pressed to recoup points as investors train their sights for progressive developments in the local front. While some optimism might be culled from the expected passage of the Omnibus Power Bill during the week's congressional caucus, the release of first quarter GNP results by week's end may cap potential ascents," 2tradeasia.com said.

PCCI Securities Brokers Corp. head of research Gonzalo Bongolan said both the weekly and daily charts did not show much immediate promise, save for a likely respite from the downturn in the form of a sideways consolidation with a slight upward bias.

Bongolan said the matter of the elections would have been put behind this week, and that it was time to move on.

"Still and all, trading activity is seen to continue to be concentrated on storied stocks, while limited bargain hunting can be expected on blue chip and good performing favorites," he said.

He said First Philippine Holdings Corp., International Container Terminal Services Inc. and Petron Corp. might play out their storylines a little bit more while bargain hunters might consider Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Metro Pacific Corp., La Tondeña Distillers Inc., San Miguel Corp., Equitable PCI Bank, ABS-CBN, Ionics, Benpres Corp., Meralco B, Ayala Land Inc., Ayala Corp. and SM Prime Holdings.

"If GDP growth beats consensus of 2.5 percent then the upward bias will become an uptick, allowing the Phisix to get back to 1,450, even 1,480," Bongolan said.

Philippine Stock Exchange

STOCK	(As of Friday, May 25, 2001)	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES						
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	150,000	
Bank of the Phil. Islands	75.5	75.5	75	75.5	484,200	
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	41.5	41.5	41.5	41.5	24,300	
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	214	214	211	213	49,800	
Prudential Bank	450	470	450	470	840	
Philippine National Bank	51	51	47	47.5	109,800	

FINANCIAL SERVICE						
Bankard Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	102,000	
First Metro Invest. Corp.	247	250	247	250	100	
Manulife Financial Corp.	1290	1295	1290	1295	2,830	
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1080	1090	1080	1090	15,800	

COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL						
COMMUNICATION						

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	41	41	41	41	6,700	
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	1,050,000	
Globe Telecom Inc.	685	685	680	685	6,380	
Liberty Telecom Holdings	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	160,000	
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3	3	3	3	241,000	
Pillit	0.47	0.47	0.44	0.44	1,670,000	
Philstar.Com Inc.	1	1	1	1	10,000	
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	680	680	665	670	118,100	
Ivantage Corp.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	10,000	
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.045	0.045	0.043	0.044	88,300,000	

POWER & ENERGY						
Manila Electric Co. A	42	43.5	42	42	230,500	
Manila Electric Co. B	57	60.5	56.5	60.5	1,733,700	
Petron Corp.	1.92	1.92	1.9	1.9	4,552,000	
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.89	0.9	0.89	0.9	40,000	

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES						
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	38,000	
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.04	2.04	1.92	2	10,058,000	
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.36	0.41	0.36	0.41	310,000	
William, Gohong & Aboliz	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	10,000	

CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS						
Alsons Cement Corp.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	30,000	
Republic Cement Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	10,000	
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.42	1.46	1.4	1.46	456,000	
Union Cement Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	458,000	

FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO						
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.14	2.14	2.12	2.12	1,802,000	
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	3	3.25	3	3.25	870,000	
Jollibee Foods Corp.	13.25	13.25	13.25	13.25	255,000	
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	27.5	28	27.5	28	77,000	

Pancake House Inc.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	10,000	
RFM Corp.	1	1.04	1	1.04	300,000	
Swift Food Inc.	1	1	1	1	10,000	
San Miguel Corp. A	46	46	46	46	35,300	
San Miguel Corp. B	49.5	50.5	49.5	50.5	765,200	
Vitarich Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	200,000	

HOLDING FIRMS						
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	7	7	7	7	1,000	
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	10,000	
Ayala Corp.	7.5	7.6	7.1	7.1	74,985,000	
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.13	0.24	0.13	0.24	70,000	

Alboliz Equity Ventures	1.46	1.5	1.42	1.48	3,830,000	
Alliance Global Group Inc.	12	12.25	11.75	11.75	1,700	
A. Soriano Corp.	0.4	0.45	0.4	0.45	2,140,000	
APC Group Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	100,000	
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.22	0.24	0.22	0.24	110,000	

Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	10,000	
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.38	1.42	1.38	1.4	3,962,000	
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	130,000	
Crown Equities Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	200,000	
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	1,600,000	

First Phil Hldgs Corp.	24.75	24.75	24.5	24.75	394,500	
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	10,000	
Global Equities Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	200,000	
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	200,000	
Ionics Inc.	12	12.25	12	12	16,000	

Ipaople Inc.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	50,000	
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.04	2.04	2	2	264,000	
Macroasia Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	20,000	
Megaworld Corp.	0.77	0.77	0.76	0.76	280,000	
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	1,970,000	

Philthread Holdings Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	100,000	
Univide Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	1,100,000	
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	180,000	

MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING						
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	5,000	
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	30,000	
Metro Alliance Holdings-B	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	10,000	
Musico Corp.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	174,000	

Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	100,000	
Pryce Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	300,000	
SPI Technologies Inc.	14.5	14.75	14.5	14.75	49,300	

HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE						
Belle Corp.	0.46	0.47	0.44	0.47	150,000	
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.46	0.46	1,110,000	
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.45	0.45	150,000	
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.19	0.21	0.19	0.21	160,000	

BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS						
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	40.5	40.5	40.5	40.5	62,500	
Cosmos Bottling Corp.-Pref.	4.65	4.65	4.65	4.65	26,000	
Globe Telecom Hldg. (Pdr)	695	695	695	695	100	
Jollibee Warrants	13	13	13	13	25,000	

Macroasia Corp. Warrants	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000	
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0028	0.003	0.0028	0.003	5,000,000	
Philweb.Com Inc.-Warrants	0.034	0.035	0.033	0.033	49,000,000	

PROPERTY						
Ayala Land Inc.	5.4	5.4	5.1	5.1	6,631,000	
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	60,000	
C & P Homes Inc.	0.3	0.32	0.3	0.31	5,870,000	

Cyber Bay Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	300,000	
Empire East Land Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.31	0.32	9,530,000	
Filmvest Land Inc.	2.12	2.12	2.06	2.08	8,043,000	
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.22	0.22	0.14	0.14	40,000	

SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.6	6.6	6.4	6.4	6,169,000	
Zipporah Rity Hldgs Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	42,640,000	

MINING						
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	4,000,000	
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	5,000,000	
Omico Corp.	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	17,000,000	

Philx Mining Corp. A	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	4,090,000	
Philx Mining Corp. B	0.23	0.23	0.225	0.225	5,410,000	
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	20,000	

OIL						
Imperial Res.	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.02	4,500,000	
Interport Res.	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	2,000,000	
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	18,000,000	

Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	1,000,000	
Pacific	0.014	0.015	0.014	0.015	2,500,000	
Sinophyl Corp.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	400,000	
South China Resources Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	20,000	

SHARES						
Banks & Fin Svc	913,270				72,891,260.00	
Comm'l & Ind'l	262,008,980				884,006,370.00	
PRO	79,283,000				109,077,160.00	

Mining	35,520,000				2,181,300.00	
OIL	28,420,000				243,500.00	
GRAND TOTALS	406,145,250				1,068,399,590.00	

AVERAGES						
Banks & Fin Svc	601.65				DOWN 4.53	
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,953.56				DOWN 16.20	
PRO	529.67				DOWN 25.40	

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Isuzu set to close main plant

TOKYO—Troubled Japanese automaker Isuzu Motors Ltd. will eliminate about a quarter of its workforce over the next three years and close one of its three main domestic plants as part of a drastic overhaul plan, newspapers reported Saturday.

Isuzu's plan would cut 9,000 of its 38,000 existing jobs, mostly through voluntary early retirement packages and a hiring freeze, the Nihon Kenzai newspaper said. The nationwide Yomiuri newspaper carried a similar report.

The automaker will also close its truck plant in the city of Kawasaki, on the southern outskirts of Tokyo, reducing its truck-making capacity by one-third, the Nihon Kenzai reported.

Isuzu spokeswoman Yoshiko Shibata would only say that the company currently has too much output capacity at its truck plants and plans to cut costs by redistributing production among domestic and overseas plants.

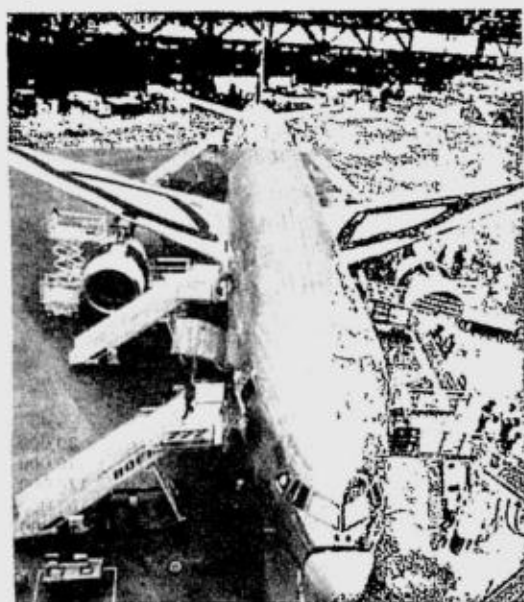
"We do have to adjust to the current level of demand," Shibata said. She declined to elaborate and would not comment on the newspaper reports. The company will discuss its cost-cutting plans when it announces earnings on Monday, she said.

The reports came after Isuzu said it would shake up management in June, replacing its chief executive and naming a former General Motors Corp. officer as vice president. GM is Isuzu's largest shareholder, owning a 49-percent stake.

Japan's economic downturn has hit Isuzu hard. The company's domestic truck sales have fallen by half in the last decade, and it has forecast a third straight year of losses.

Isuzu hopes to cut costs by working closely with GM parts suppliers while expanding sales of diesel engines made at a factory in Poland to its US partner, the Nihon Kenzai reported.

It said the company hopes to reduce much of its estimated \$8.3-billion debt and is considering selling its headquarters building in Tokyo.



AILING commercial airplane operations force Boeing to let people go

Boeing lays off 600 workers

SEATTLE—Boeing Corp. said on Friday it would lay off 600 workers at its commercial airplane operation in Long Beach, California, as part of the aerospace giant's ongoing drive to trim costs.

The cuts make up about 12 percent of the 5,000 people employed at the Long Beach commercial operation, which makes the 717, the smallest jet in Boeing's lineup, which has seen lackluster sales in recent years.

Boeing had said in March it planned to scale back those operations, but had not revealed a specific number of layoffs, spokesperson Warren Lamb said.

"We informed our managers at the end of April that the expected downsizing that we announced would be about 600 jobs by the end of this year," Lamb said.

The cuts would affect all job categories, Lamb said.

Boeing inherited the 717 in 1997 when it bought rival McDonnell Douglas, which originally launched it as the MD-95, successor to the DC-9. It is the only commercial jet still built at the old McDonnell Douglas facility in Long Beach.

Long Beach is also home to Boeing's C-17 heavy-duty military transport factory, which is unaffected by this round of layoffs, Lamb said.

The Seattle-based company, which is moving its headquarters to Chicago this year, employs a total of 14,000 people in Long Beach.

Boeing has pared its company-wide payroll to 198,100 as of May 1, down from a peak of 238,600 in 1998.

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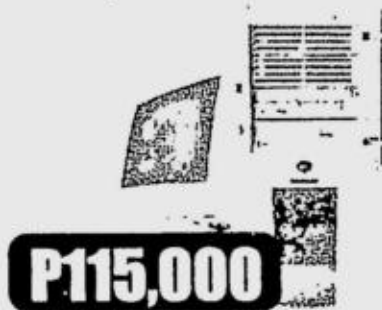
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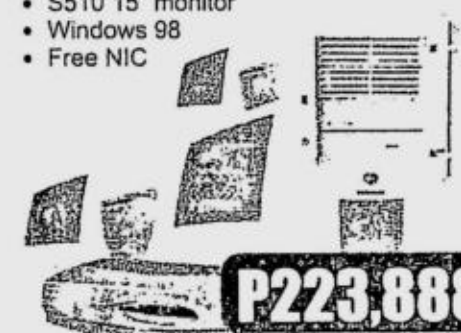
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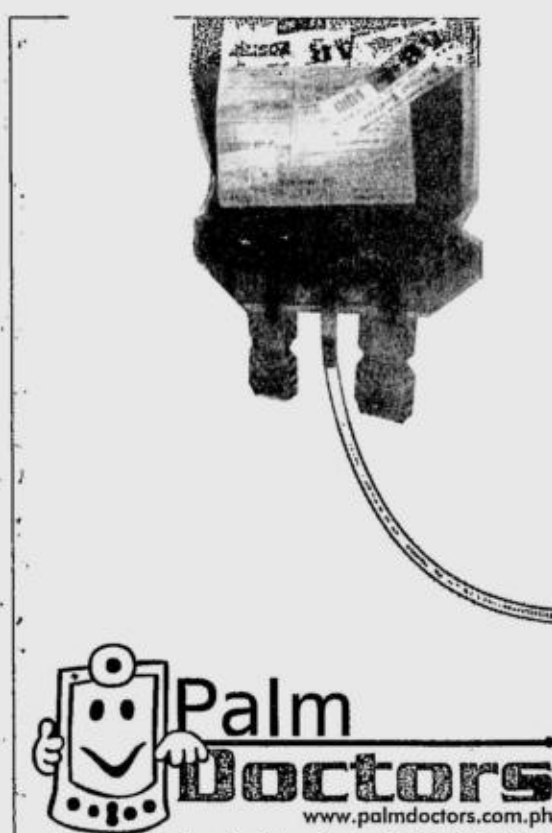
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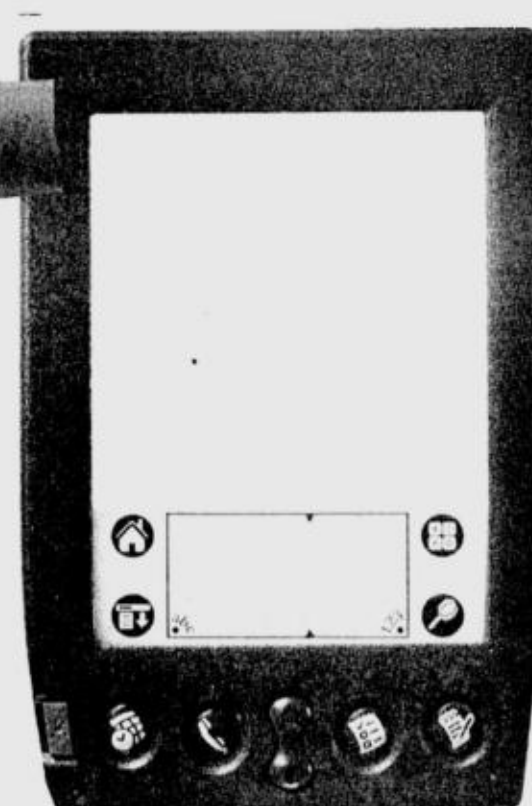
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Offering the best to the global economy

JVL International Industries Corp. forges agreement with Chunlan (Group) Corporation



Guo Xiang, deputy general manager of the Chunlan Overseas Group, forges an agreement with JVL International Industries Corp., through its President and CEO, Alfredo "Jun" V. Lagman, for the exclusive distributorship of Chunlan products in the Philippines. Also in photo are (standing, from left) Cheong Tin-Ming, Colin, senior manager of the Export Department of Chunlan Overseas Group, and Irwin de Dios, JVL International's vice president for sales and marketing.

State-of-the-art equipment. Over 3,000 technical experts focused on developing new products and researching existing technologies. A strongly supported, state-owned enterprise. Sprawling factories situated in various parts of China. Cutting-edge technology. Competitive pricing.

"How could I resist all that?" Alfredo "Jun" V. Lagman, president and chief executive officer of distributorship company JVL International Industries Corporation, says as he recounted what he saw and learned during his initial visit to one of Chunlan (Group) Corporation's factories in Taizhou, Jiangsu, China.

Having toured various countries in search of a manufacturing company that would tailor-fit into the requirements of the Philippine market, the 38-year-old business veteran (having worked in the family business, Alen Group of Companies, since he was 14) was clearly impressed with what he saw. "I knew then that Chunlan has a very promising future in the Philippines," he says.

Lagman has valid reasons to make the pronouncement. The largest household electrical appliance company in China in

terms of profit, Chunlan boasts of a 70% market share in the region and an asset base of approximately US\$15 billion.

Ranked as one of the top three companies in China, the Chunlan group, since its inception in 1986, has now ventured in five major industries: electrical appliances, motor, electronics, domestic commerce, and overseas trade.

The electrical appliances group, for one, prides itself for obtaining an ISO9001 certification when Chunlan was just starting out. Their household appliances also bear the distinction of being the "No. 1 Brand" for nine consecutive years, in terms of sales, as chosen by China's State Statistics Bureau.

The Chunlan Motors Group, on the other hand, posts an annual production rate of one million motorcycles and motorcycle engines. These

motorcycles are widely accepted in more than 30 countries and regions in the world that include the Netherlands, Spain, Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, Belgium, Russia, Greece, Argentina, South America, Canada and the US.

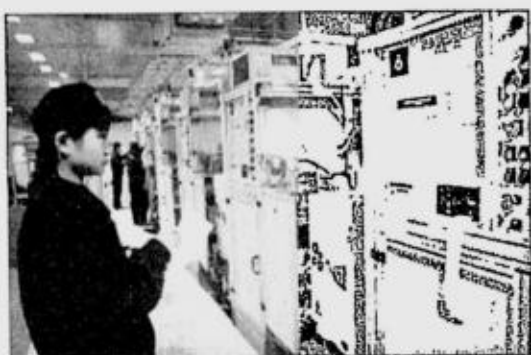
These achievements owe to the fact that research is top priority for Chunlan. In fact, research and educational institutions such as the Chunlan Academy, Chunlan College, and Chunlan Post-Doctoral Work Station have been built to further boost the company's technological advancement.



Production engineers from the Chunlan Motors Group inspect the assembly line of the motorcycle engines.

qualities are now taking a backseat," he says.

He notes as well that Chunlan's various products have received favorable recognition from all over the



State-of-the-art equipment is used for the production line of Chunlan washing machines.

And since the company is state-owned, its tax-free operations allow it to offer high-quality products at significantly lower costs.

With his vast experience in business, Lagman recognizes that having all these advantages will enhance a company's chances of leading in the highly-competitive global economy.

"Continued research, superior products and affordable prices are the major requirements of the practical Filipino. Brand names that do not bear these three distinctive

world. Having distributed its line of air conditioning units, refrigerators, washing machines, colored TVs and motorcycles to 82 different countries such as the Netherlands, Spain, Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, Belgium, Russia, Greece, Argentina, South America, Canada and the US

- Lagman knew that the Philippines is now ready for Chunlan's innovative products and services.

At around the same time that Lagman was mapping out an agreement with Chunlan, JVL International Industries Corp., the local company which will be responsible for its exclusive distribution, was also being primed.

Composed of a management team powered by young and dynamic professionals in the appliance industry, JVL International Industries and Chunlan (Group) Corporation are now ready to take on the challenges posed by the Philippine economy.

And as Lagman says, "The partnership with Chunlan is just a start. We intend to succeed in our country and help the Filipinos gain access to a wide range of superior products available at affordable prices."

Trade secrets JVL shares recipe for business success

When business conditions are unfavorable, one would think that it could be the worst possible time to introduce a new product line.

Alfredo "Jun" V. Lagman, thought otherwise as he pushed head on with his vision of giving Filipinos an opportunity of owning world class quality consumer products available at affordable prices.

Brimming with the same confidence and enthusiasm of a fresh graduate looking for work for the first time, the seasoned businessman is president and chief executive officer of JVL International Industries Corporation, a company that Lagman founded to distribute a new line of world-class products from Chunlan (Group) Corporation from the People's Republic of China.

Lagman explains his gung-ho attitude. "We can't deny that we are, at present, immersed in a river of economic crisis. But we need not despair. All we have to do is go against the flow."

Pretty optimistic, one might say. But Lagman has proven that taking risks has its rewards. In fact, JVL International has been receiving favorable response from its dealers all over the country.

But the cautious businessman that he is, Lagman did not plunge into the venture without the proper gear. With his life-long exposure and experience in the refrigeration and airconditioning business, Lagman recognized early on during the Asian financial crisis that the construction industry was taking a downturn as the economic uncertainties of the time compelled business to put on hold new construction.

On the other hand, Lagman points out that the growing number of households was certain to fuel demand for basic household appliances. Cognizant, however, of the economic crisis, he notes that consumers would place a high premium on two key factors: quality and competitive pricing.

On this note, Lagman says he redirected his focus on the appliance industry.

However, with a wide array of recognizable brand names in the market, Lagman stresses that manufacturing his own line of products was out of the question.

"So I asked my people to go look for a company, preferably in Asia, that can offer three things: high quality products, competitive prices, and company stability. After an exhaustive search, we zeroed in on Chunlan, which passed all our criteria," he says.

"I first presented our capabilities - what JVL can offer them, our strong dealer network in the country, and our marketing and management infrastructure. When the Chunlan group saw our expertise in the business, they asked me to go see their manufacturing plant in China at once."

The rest is history.

Lagman's initial visit to Chunlan's ultra-modern factories in China was in Taizhou, Jiangsu Province. "We were very impressed with what we saw. I didn't expect that their factory would be more modern than the factories I've visited in Europe, Japan, and the US. And since then, we have made a number of follow-up trips to principally work out a distributorship agreement with them," he points out.

Armed with an exclusive agreement to distribute Chunlan products in the Philippines, Lagman says JVL International Industries' vision of providing Filipinos world class products at competitive prices is close to being achieved.

Lagman says he is confident that his workforce will be very successful in selling the Chunlan product line. "My business philosophy is to make sure my people are happy. You cannot run a successful business by yourself, so make sure that your employees are happy by giving them a good package and by always keeping your lines of communication open to them," he stresses.

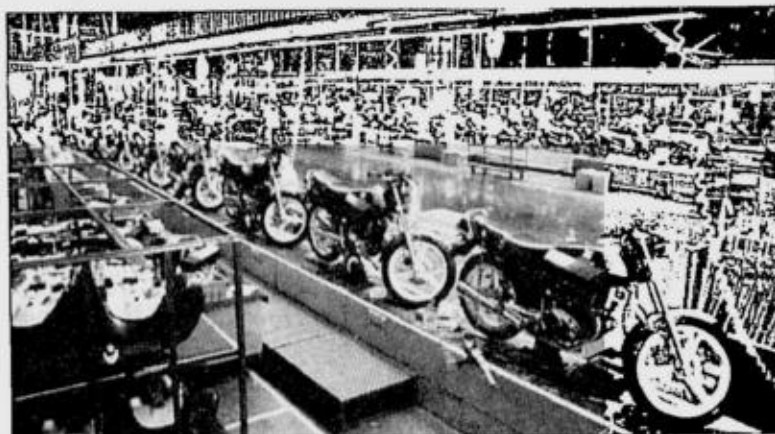
He says this business philosophy is paying off as majority of JVL International Industries employees voluntarily put in long working hours. "It is not surprising to still see many employees working late at night. Mind you, quite a number of them join me for aerobics classes at 6:00 in the morning in our own gym."

"Good physical condition and a sound mind contribute to the general well-being of my employees. Since exercise does a lot of good for me, I also give this to them for free. By treating my employees like family, I know they in turn, will take care of the company like it is their own. With that, we know we can provide our customers with the best service possible."



Chunlan Launch Program Glorietta Activity Center May 28 to June 3

Date	Activities
May 28, Monday (5:00 - 8:00pm)	
Introduction of hosts	Mr. Eddie Mercado Ms. Carol Tan
Welcome Remarks	Mr. Alfredo V. Lagman President and CEO JVL International Industries Corp.
	Audio-Visual Presentation
Opening Address	Mr. Guo Xiang Deputy General Manager Chunlan Overseas Group
Guest Speaker	H.E. Ambassador Wang Chungui People's Republic of China
	Ribbon-cutting ceremonies
	Unveiling of display
	Cocktails
	Introduction of product endorser
	Grand raffle draw
	Bartender flare number
	Toast to a promising partnership
May 29, Tuesday 5:30 - 7:00pm	Band performance Bo Razon and Puro Ritmo
May 30, Wednesday 5:30 - 7:00pm	Band performance Escape
May 31, Thursday 5:30 - 7:00pm	Band performance Bo Razon and Puro Ritmo
June 1, Friday 5:30 - 7:00pm	Band performance Escape
June 2, Saturday 4:30 - 6:00pm	Band performance Pido + Take One
June 3, Sunday 3:30 - 5:00pm	Magic show



Chunlan CL125 motorcycles go through the fully-automated assembly line.

Abarrientos makes the wise move



Johnny Abarrientos, Philippine basketball's flying sensation, inks an agreement with JVL International as the official product endorser of Chunlan's line of motorcycles and home appliances. Shown in photo are (from left) coach Chot Reyes, Abarrientos, JVL International's President and CEO Jun V. Lagman, and Juliet Tomas, VP for Treasury of JVL International.

The Flying A of Philippine basketball, Johnny Abarrientos, is the official endorser of Chunlan's line of motorcycles and home appliances.

"Johnny embodies everything that Chunlan technology is - agile and reliable," says JVL International Industries Corporation President and Chief Executive Officer Alfredo "Jun" V. Lagman.

"Filipinos identify with him. He is an icon of excellence in Philippine basketball," adds Lagman when asked of JVL International's decision to get Johnny as image model and product endorser.

Known for his high-flying shots and flashy moves on the hardwood, the Flying A will appear in Chunlan's advertising campaign that will be launched side by side with the formal introduction of Chunlan products in the market.

The nationwide launch at the Glorietta Activity Center in Makati on May 28 will officially kick-off Chunlan's entry into the motorcycle and home appliance industry in the Philippines.

"We, at JVL International and Chunlan (Group) Corporation, are infusing local flavor with China's cutting-edge technology to better reach our target markets. We hope that by doing this, there will be faster acceptance of our global products in local shores," adds Lagman.

World-class Chunlan products for the Filipino home



CL 100-4



CL 125-12

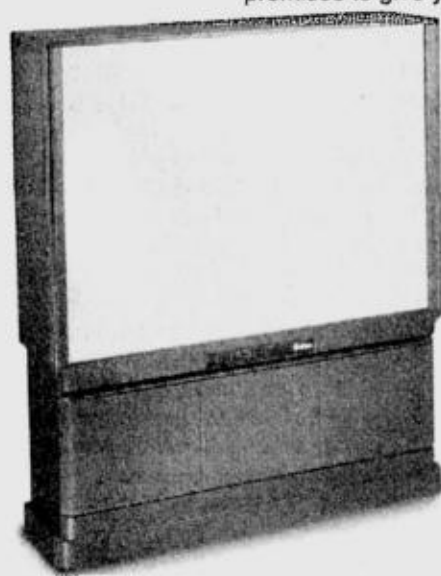


CL 250

Driven for excellence. Chunlan motorcycles, which come in three different models, are designed to beat the hazards that you may encounter on the road. Its powerful engines maintain trouble-free rides and deliver fuel-efficient performance. Ideal for short trips around the block or for long drives in the countryside, Chunlan motorcycles combine all these features: power, convenience, dependability, flexibility and sleek styling.

Redefining video and audio clarity. With its wide, super thin screens, Chunlan's Plasma color television promises to give you the ultimate viewing experience.

The Plasma TVs come with high definition systems that enhance video clarity. Multi input terminals for video, S-video, RGB signal, and various high quality Image YcbCr signals are also provided along with multi-systems for PAL, NTSC, SECAM, N-PAL, M-PAL, 4.43 NTSC.



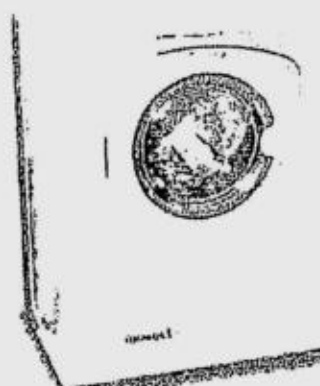
A step ahead of plain cooling. Chunlan's window-type air conditioners come with functional, wave front cover designs and rotary-type compressors that provide zero-noise performance and efficient air movement.



Chunlan air conditioners are also equipped with grooved copper tubes that are exposed to the refrigerant to ensure maximum cooling efficiency and better heat transfer. A charcoal-filled, cross-ambient thermostat is also present in every unit to effectively detect and adjust to changes in temperature.

ISO9001    

XQG50-Q8/A

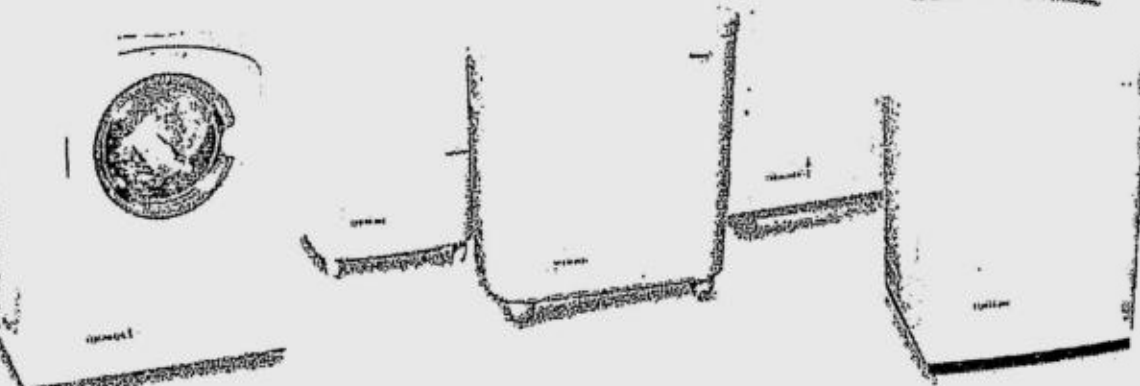


XPB50-802

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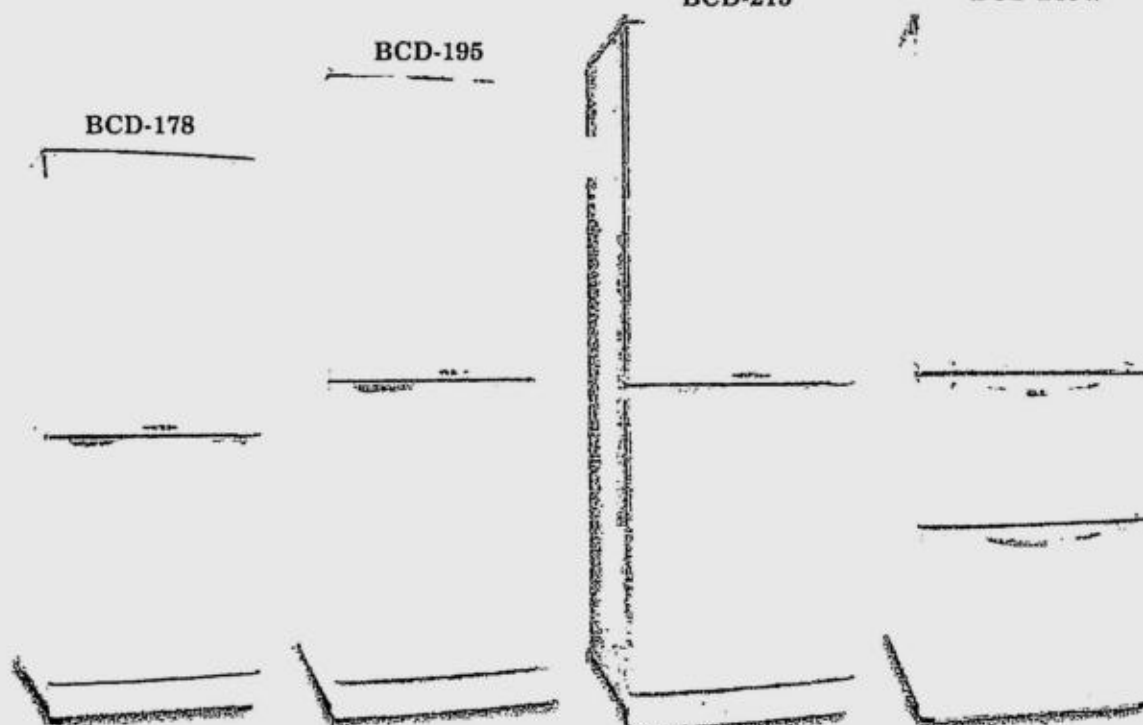
Intelligent washing. Chunlan washing machines' automated sensors determine the most suitable program for your wash, based on the weight of your laundry. It also has an efficient water distribution system that dissolves detergents completely. The intelligent washing machine comes in five different models to cater to your various washing needs.

BCD-178

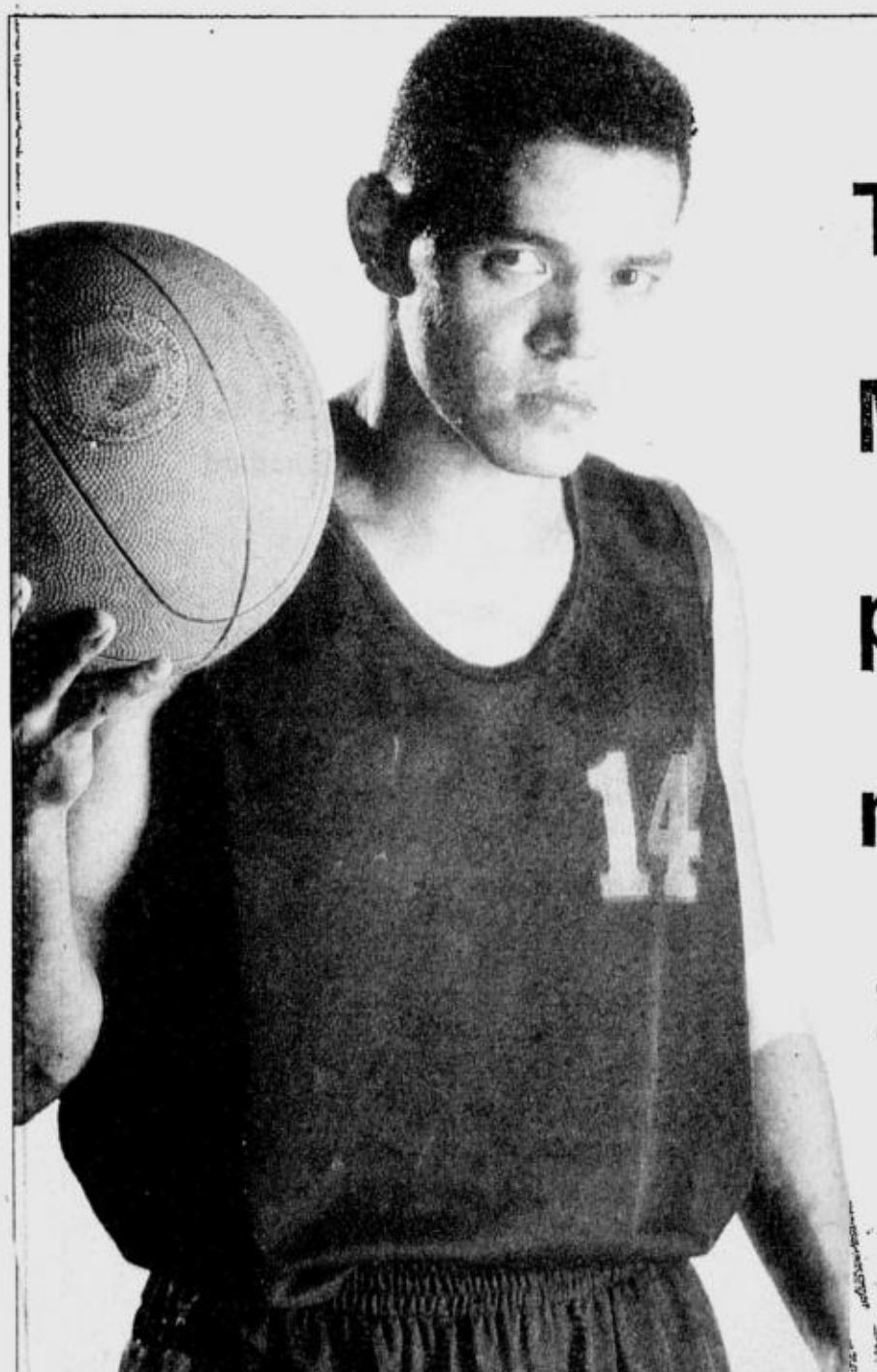
BCD-195

BCD-215

BCD-240W



Freshness to the last detail. Chunlan refrigerators feature revolutionary bottom-freezer compartment designs for greater functionality. Equipped with a powerful compressor and thermostat control, every Chunlan refrigerator guarantees fast cooling and allows flexible adjustment of the temperature inside the unit. Spacious interiors are also provided to fully accommodate a variety of food types in whatever form or size. Compartmentalized freezers are also provided to facilitate efficient storage of different types of food.



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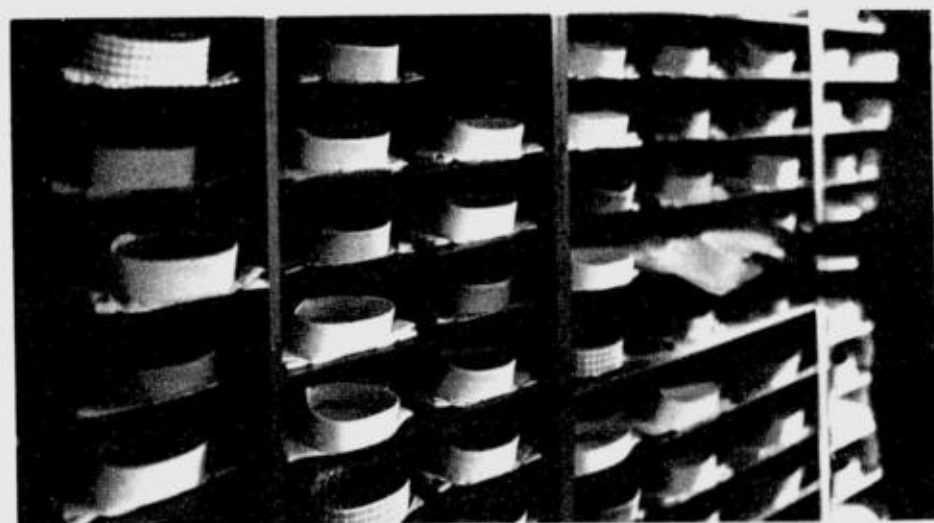
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Comelec aims to finally computerize elections

By ERWIN LEMUEL G. OLIVA

AFTER COMMISSION on Elections Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco was stripped of the chairmanship of the printing committee early this year, Comelec Chair Alfredo Benipayo has expressed plans to take over the modernization committee that she heads.

Benipayo is taking over the committee to ensure that the shelved five-year modernization project would push through before the elections in 2004, with the change in committee chairmanship to be decided upon by the Comelec commission en banc.

Under Republic Act 8436, the May 14 elections should have been automated. The traditional way of casting and counting ballots, of recording them on paper, and transporting them from the provinces to Metro Manila to the national canvassing center at the Philippine International Convention Center would have been replaced.

Supposed to replace this "primitive" system were automated counting machines that do the work of hundreds of teachers in the provinces and the cities.

Just a month after People Power II, the Comelec en banc passed a resolution that placed the modernization project on hold due to lack of funds and time. The deferred modernization projects included the Voter's Registration Identification System (VRIS), the Automated Counting and Consolidation of Results System (ACCORS), and the Precinct Mapping and Computerized Voters' List Verification.

The P6.5-billion VRIS was a project awarded to Photokina Marketing Corp. last year. The Department of Justice eventually blocked its implementation after alleged irregularities on how the contract was awarded to the company were reported in the newspapers.

Reports indicated that Guia Gomez, a mistress of former President Joseph Estrada, was linked to Photokina's winning bid. But Comelec officials at that time, particularly Tancangco, denied irregularities in the bidding process.

Gomez's influence was allegedly to push for Photokina's bid over the objections of former Comelec Chair Harriet Demetriou.

Some senators are currently planning to conduct an inquiry looking into the Comelec's failure to implement the modernization project, which is a violation of RA 8436.

The National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) and several civil society groups, meanwhile have pushed for the impeachment of Tancangco, the Comelec official they believe should be blamed for the May 14 elections mess.

Namfrel also insisted that there would have been no chaos and disenfranchisement during the May 14 elections had the computerization project of elections been implemented.

Tancangco vs Benipayo

Tancangco, however, has continuously said she is not to be blamed and that she has proof to show.

In several resolutions, she said that it was the commission en banc, chaired by Benipayo, that should be answerable.

"It was Benipayo's commission that shelved the project," she said in a press conference during the national canvassing at the PICC.

She said that the commission en banc based

its decision on consultations with "senior officials and some field officials."

"If you were the decision-maker, who would you consult? The chair of the modernization committee or the senior staff?" Tancangco added. "It's now a question of decision-making. It's a question of leadership, or how you conduct business in a collegial body like the Comelec."

Resolution No. 3846 issued by the commission en banc in March 2001 put the modernization projects on hold due to lack of funds and time. All commissioners, except Tancangco, signed the resolution.

In another resolution (Resolution No. 3720), Tancangco had agreed to defer the Precinct Mapping project and the CVL verification project under certain conditions, including her not being "held liable for whatever complaints of confusion and disenfranchisement of voters in this coming May 14 elections."

That resolution quoted Tancangco as saying that the current practice is that voters are assigned to precincts alphabetically instead of their actual location/residence based on supposed "permanent precinct maps" that have been in place.

She claimed that the initial precinct mapping "found that the (existing CVL) had been juggled and padded from 20 to more than 50 percent...causing confusion and disenfranchisement on election day, and undetected insertion of spurious entries and creation of ghost precincts."

Tancangco even went to the extent of accusing some commissioners and senior staff of blocking the project, thus the delay of the Precinct Mapping project. Commissioner Rex Borra was also singled out as the one insisting on the 1998 CVL list.

In an interview, Benipayo, however said that the use of the incomplete Precinct Mapping project would have led to more "failure of elections" in the country.

Namfrel

Namfrel Chair Jose Concepcion and civil society groups have pushed for the impeachment of Tancangco. The group said that the commissioner is being impeached for neglect of duty, as she failed to implement the computerization of the elections.

Tancangco is also being accused of "gross, inexcusable negligence," since she has refused or failed to attend en banc meetings, especially when Demetriou was still chair of the commission. Namfrel has asked lawyers to study the filing of the case before Congress.

"In computerization, it's very easy to commit fraud without people knowing it," Tancangco remarked.

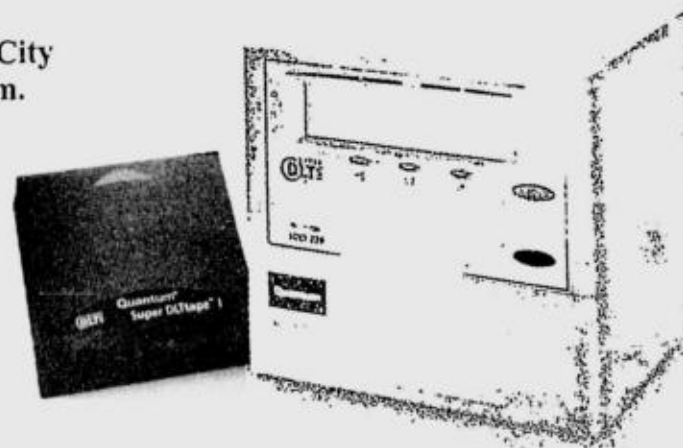
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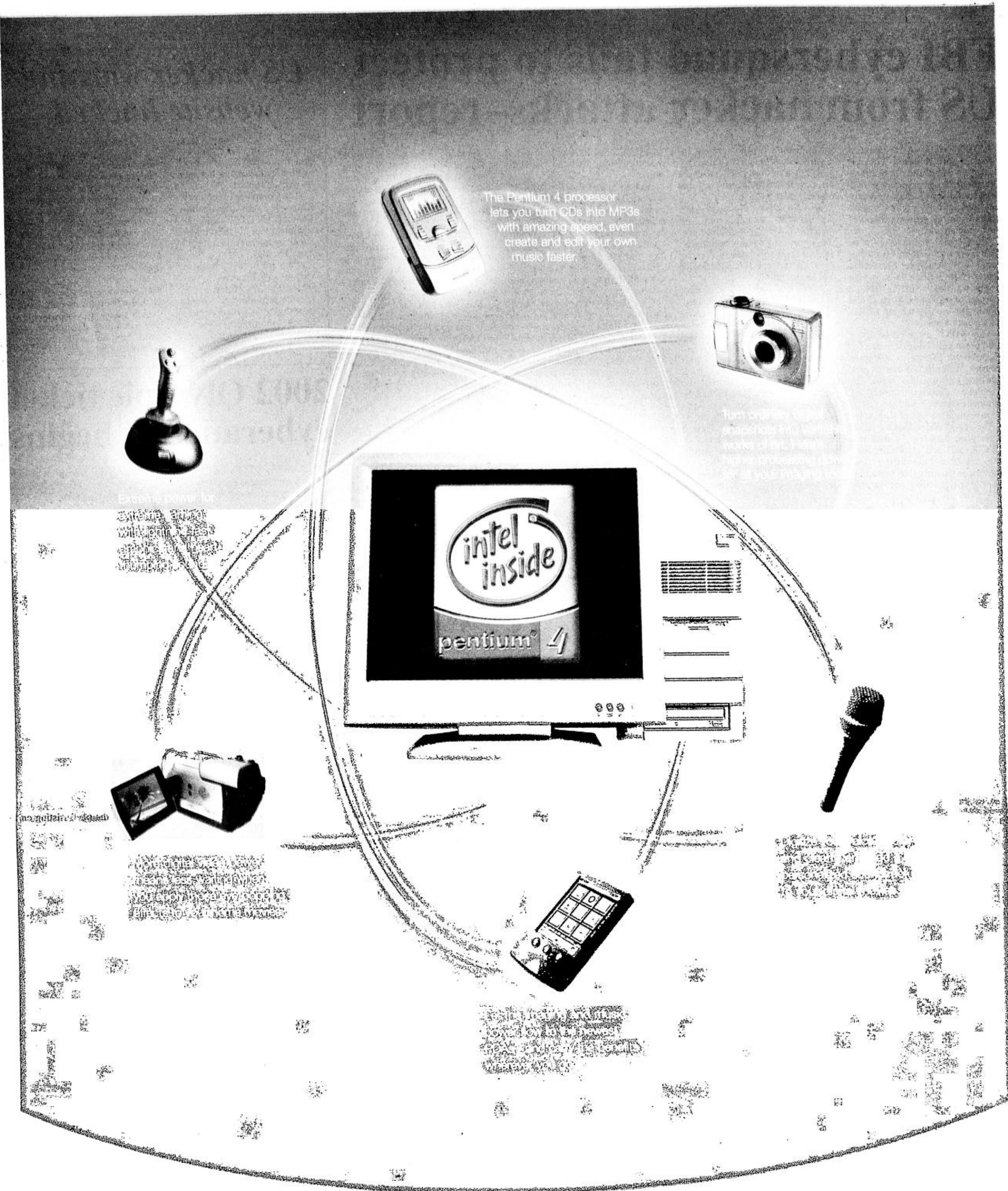
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FBI cybersquad fails to protect US from hacker attacks—report

WASHINGTON—A US congressional report released Tuesday blasted a Federal Bureau of Investigation-led cybersecurity task force for failing to adequately protect the nation's computer networks from the growing threat of electronic attacks.

The General Accounting Office (GAO) report said the FBI-led National Infrastructure Protection Center (NIPC) often fails to give timely warnings, suffers from a shortage of staff and expertise, and coordinates poorly among different security agencies.

The NIPC, established by a 1998 presidential directive as a focal point for threats to computer security, "often is not able to provide timely information on changes in threat conditions or warnings of imminent attacks," said the GAO, the investigative arm of Congress.

The report added that a "major underlying problem is that the NIPC's roles and responsibilities have not been fully defined and are not consistently interpreted by other entities involved in the

government's broader critical infrastructure protection strategy."

US cybersecurity officials were on the defensive following the report's release.

Ronald Dick, the newly appointed NIPC director, told AFP that the GAO report "highlights the significant accomplishments" of the task force. However, he agreed that it lacked adequate staff and coordination.

"We need additional resources... not just FBI resources," he said.

Agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency and National Security Agency as well as the Department of Defense have yet to contribute the full amount of staff needed, he added.

Nonetheless, he said that the NIPC, among other things, had issued warnings that helped deter at least 1,600 hacker attacks on financial institutions, and helped in the probe that led to the arrest of three members of a Russian hacker ring.

Despite its limitations, Dick said in a letter responding to the GAO,

"the dedicated men and women of the NIPC have done an outstanding job."

But he added that "without an increased staff... the NIPC simply cannot reach its full capacity to assess, warn and protect."

In a related matter, a top White House security official said Tuesday that the government's new cybersecurity plan would need considerable input from the private sector.

"We need your help to think about not how to secure the current system but to secure the next generation of national information infrastructure," Richard Clarke, the National Security Council coordinator for security, infrastructure protection and counterterrorism, told a conference here.

Clarke said the Bush administration, which is crafting a new cybersecurity plan to replace the first one drafted in 1998, needs private sector input.

"The first plan was a good plan, but it was written by bureaucrats," he said.

Speaking to business leaders at a Global Internet Project forum, Clarke said that as millions of new devices such as wireless phones connect to the Internet, the possibilities for malicious attacks would multiply.

Clarke said the need for cybersecurity is becoming increasingly important as more functions—from stock exchanges to air traffic control to national defense systems—become Web-based.

The GAO report noted that, according to intelligence officials, "a clear risk exists that terrorists or hostile foreign states could launch computer-based attacks on systems supporting critical infrastructures to severely damage or disrupt national defense or vital public operations or steal sensitive data."

Among other threats, Clarke said there is an "increase of 'smart viruses' capable of updating themselves."

He said that threats could come from hackers or nation-states seeking to attack the US computer infrastructure. **AFP**

US hacker warning website hacked

PITTSBURGH, Pennsylvania—In a cruel irony, the organization that is supposed to warn against hacker attacks has seen its website hacked.

The Computer Emergency Response Team Coordination Center (CERT/CC) said in a statement that it's been under attack by hackers since 11:30 a.m., Tuesday.

"We are in touch with various organizations, including ISPs (Internet service providers) to help us investigate and resolve the attack," the organization said. "In the meantime, we regret any inconvenience you

may experience."

The site is a cooperative effort of law enforcement and high-tech companies, and is supposed to act as an early warning system for computer hacker attacks.

Officials said the organization can use alternative means, including faxes and phone calls, to issue alerts while under hacker attack.

According to the CERT/CC, it is experiencing a denial-of-service assault, in which a hacker overloads a site's computers with thousands of simultaneous requests for data. **AFP**

US launches Asian portal to boost trade

THE UNITED STATES launched an Asian Internet portal on Tuesday aimed at boosting trade by linking American exporters with business partners around the world.

BuyUSA.com, created by the US Department of Commerce and computer giant IBM, allows American companies to find international buyers and distributors for their products, officials said.

Jerry Mitchell, acting director general of the US Commercial Service, told a news conference in Manila via video link-up from Washington that the new electronic marketplace would boost trade although its larger aim was to help American exporters.

The portal would be formally introduced in Manila on Thursday at CommAsia 2001, a regional exhibition covering the telecommunications, broadcast, electronics and information technology fields.

Mitchell said Washington would be rolling out BuyUSA.com in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, New Zealand and Australia, among other economies in the region.

The website's launch comes at a time when the United States faces a slowdown in economic growth and a burgeoning trade deficit.

Export-led Asian nations are also worried that a fall-off in exports to the United States would dampen their economic growth.

But Mitchell said the new portal was a win-win formula for both the US and Asian economies.

"If we can continue to generate exports to Asia and elsewhere, then our US companies are certainly going to import more as well," Mitchell said.

"Everyone recognizes that trade is two-way and you can't prosper in one country without prospering in the rest of the world," he explained.

Dan Gupta, IBM's program director of global trade services, said the US economic slowdown had prodded American companies, particularly small and medium-sized ones, to explore new export markets and expand existing ones.

This would open up opportunities for the rest of the world too, he said.

At present, Gupta said only 30 percent of international trade was in the hands of large companies and BuyUSA.com's emphasis was to raise that level to 70 percent, without giving a time scale.

US commercial counselor George Ruffner said the portal would "bring the best American suppliers of everything from airplanes to zinc to the fingertips" of buyers.

Ruffner said the new website offered the full spectrum of business matchmaking at a single location.

From BuyUSA.com, one can gather company and product information, arrange live or virtual meetings with suppliers, shop for payment and financing alternatives and make the final shipping and insurance arrangements, he said.

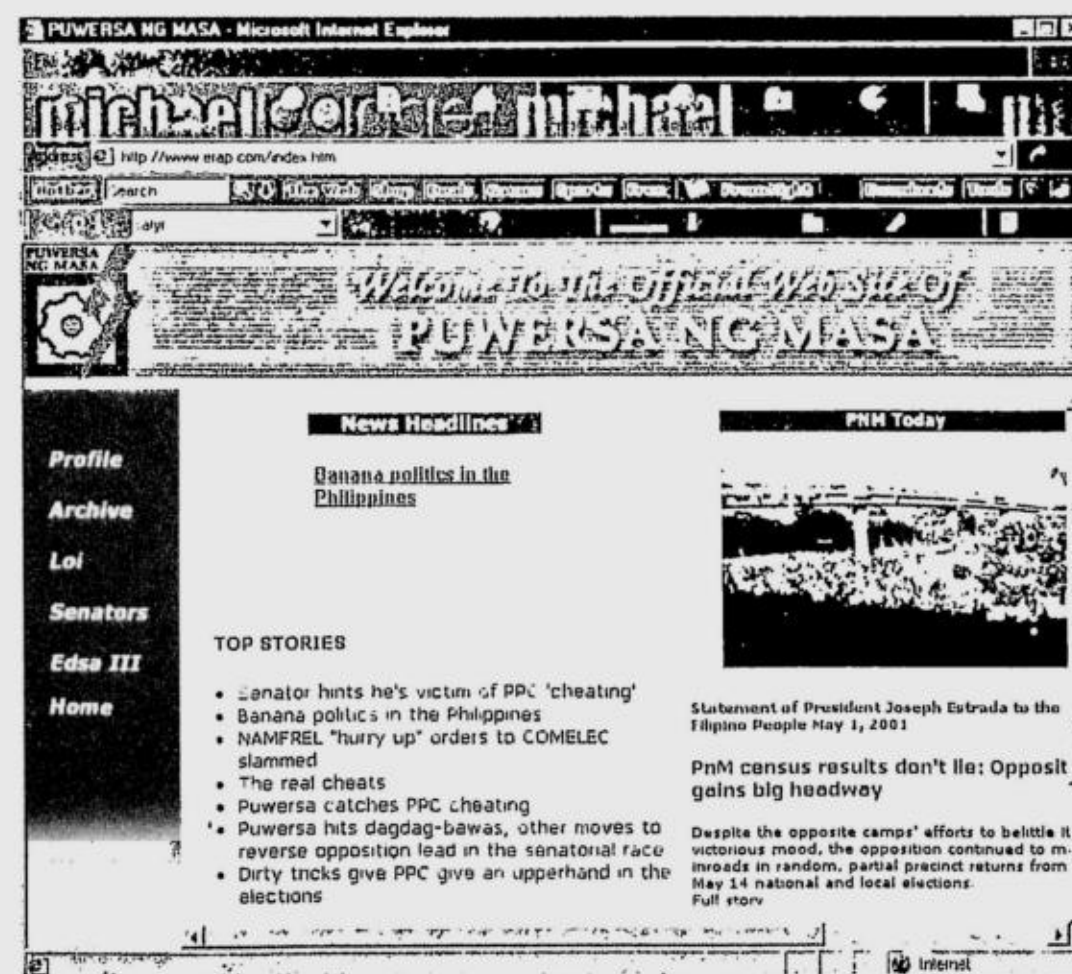
The Philippines was chosen as the website's launch pad because of expanding bilateral trade and investment ties, among other reasons, officials said.

The United States is the largest market for Philippine exports and the No. 1 investor in Manila. Total bilateral trade amounted to \$23 billion last year. **AFP**



WHO OWNS THIS NAME?

A certain R.L. who left only an e-mail address owns the domain name www.peoplepowercoalition.com (top photo). A visit to this site reveals that a page has yet to be constructed pointing to the said domain. Meanwhile, the opposition Pwersa ng Masa is utilizing www.erap.com (below) to the hilt by making it its official website.



2002 Olympic ticket cyberraucion begins

SALT LAKE CITY—Salt Lake City Winter Games organizers and the Internet auction site eBay Monday launched the first ever on-line auction of Olympic tickets.

More than 100 front row tickets to 11 events at the 2002 Winter Olympics will be on offer during the 15-day auction.

On the block are coveted tickets for the men's, women's and pairs figure skating long programs and the ice hockey gold medal match.

Tickets to the prestigious men's downhill, as well as individual and team ski jumping and some freestyle skiing events will also be available.

Despite the global reach of the Internet, the auction terms state that buyers must provide a valid street address in the United States. **AFP**

Winter sports fans from outside the United States who wish to buy tickets to the Games must still go through the sellers designated by their country's National Olympic Committee.

Proceeds generated above the face value of the tickets will be used to help fund the Paralympic Games next March.

"The special ticket auction will result in a tremendous benefit for Salt Lake's Paralympic Games," said Mitt Romney, president of the Salt Lake Organizing Committee (SLOC).

To bid on the tickets, Web surfers must register as eBay users, which is free of charge. The auction site can be accessed directly or through the SLOC website (www.saltlake2002.com). **AFP**

SMC awards IT contract to local online exchange

FOOD, beverage and packaging conglomerate San Miguel Corp. has awarded a contract for the company's personal computer requirements to SourcePilipinas.com, a local online exchange, which is expected to result to a 17 percent discount from San Miguel's last information technology purchase.

SourcePilipinas is an e-marketplace player that allows local companies to transact business with around 300 trading partners currently in SourcePilipinas' roster, via the online firm's auction services.

"On one hand, the transparency in the system promotes competitive pricing, which is beneficial to the buyer. On the other hand, multiple bidding gives suppliers numerous chances to post their best offers, unlike offline quotes which are often one-time only," Christine

Yap, SourcePilipinas' chief operating officer said. "We recognize the need for buyers to generate cost savings, and suppliers to tap into new markets. It's a win-win situation, especially during these difficult times."

In addition to its auction services, SourcePilipinas members can have access to an extensive catalogue, for their immediate requirements, including office supplies, computers and accessories and hardware and construction materials.

"Membership in SourcePilipinas has simplified our procurement process, on top of tangibles such as lower purchase costs. E-procurement enables us to actively participate in increasing SMC shareholder value, as these cost savings directly translate to the company's bottom line," SMC officials said.

Chinese gov't detains anti-American writer's son over Net posting

BEIJING—The son of a writer has been detained by China's state security police for posting anti-American essays written by his father on an Internet homepage, the father said Monday.

The police detained Hu Dalin, 30, in Shaoyang City in the central province of Hunan on May 18, searching his computer and ransacking his home, his father Lu Jiaping told AFP.

The police action came after Hu, who shares the family name of his paternal grandmother, posted several articles by his father that criticized Beijing's US policy as being too soft, Lu said.

Lu said he had little computer experience and depended on his son to post his writings on a personal website provided by local Internet service providers.

Following the April 1 collision between a US spy plane and a Chinese fighter jet, Hu posted five articles by his father which strongly criticized Beijing's handling of the incident.

"It is not reasonable for my son to be arrested by the police for my writings. If his arrest has to do with my writings then why don't they come and get me?" said 60-year-old Lu.

"I do not oppose the Chinese government, I have only criticized its policy toward the United States," he said.

Police in Shaoyang refused to comment.

The detention follows the arrest of several Chinese cyberdissidents under draconian Internet laws which came into force early this year. They include Wang Jinbo, who last week was charged with "defaming" police on the Internet.

Guo Qinghai, a bank economist in the northeastern city of Cangzhou near Beijing, was convicted of subversion and sentenced to four years in prison in April for posting pro-democracy articles and advocating political reform on the Internet.

Guo was the first Chinese cyberwriter to be sentenced in Beijing's crackdown on freedom of expression on the Internet.

The Internet has posed an unprecedented problem for the Chinese government, which for years had strict control of public opinion through stringent censorship of the press and publishing industry.

The number of Internet users in China is growing at breakneck speed, rising 150 percent last year to 22.5 million, according to government figures. **AFP**

Siemens, Pirelli to jointly develop new technologies

SIEMENS Information and Communication Networks (ICN) and Pirelli Submarine Telecom Systems announced that they have established a partnership to jointly develop optical transmission equipment for long haul applications.

The product designs, which are on the cutting edge of the technology forefront, will be for the exclusive use of Pirelli for Submarine Repeatered and of Siemens for Terrestrial Transmission applications.

The common technology platform on which the new products will be developed would enable Pirelli and Siemens to provide complete and integrated optical networks employing terrestrial and submarine systems, and to customize best-in-class city-to-city

solutions based on each customer's needs.

Optical networks allow the use of fiber-optic cables as the transmission medium. Fiber-optic cables provide high capacity voice, data and mobile services through submarine cable systems and/or outside plant facilities. The next generation networks demand greater speed and even more bandwidth—from 155 megabits to 3.2 terabits. This is why carriers are faced with the challenge of building efficient transmission networks capable of supporting a vast amount of diverse services.

The demand for these integrated networks is strongly increasing from the telecom incumbents, the

capacity providers and carriers' carriers, and the new operators. The focus of these customers is to operate seamless networks connecting their points of presence in major cities or worldwide. The trend of co-participation in specific investments for new systems is the driver to an increasing integration of the market.

In the Philippines, Siemens has been part of the world's longest fiber-optic network at 5,600 kilometers linking Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao through a combination of sea cable and land fiber-optic systems.

Guenter Binder, senior vice president of ICN Philippines, said in a press statement that Philippine

carriers would benefit from the partnership with Pirelli.

"As carriers move to reach the Filipino people in all islands to provide business and residential communication facilities, the submarine system will connect the whole archipelago. We see here that the geographical structure of the country will not be a hindrance in providing telecommunications facilities."

"The Philippines has a lot of room for improvement in reaching the people and together with Pirelli we are here to upgrade the telecommunications infrastructure to continuously provide quality service. We help the carriers bring seamless solutions for the benefit of the whole country," Binder said.

Inside Intel: Going beyond microchips and PCs

BY ERWIN LEMUEL G. OLIVA

AFTER ROBERT Noyce and Gordon Moore left Fairchild Semiconductor to create Intel (short for Integrated Electronics), they already realized that they were going to revolutionize the world of computing.

But their climb to success began by accident and some luck.

The company began making random access memory chips until a Japanese company called Busicom, which manufactures calculators, hired them to design a chip to power their number-crunching products. Suddenly it struck them that they have just given out an invention that would make the company rich. So they bought the design and the marketing rights of the chip back from Busicom. The rest is history...

Today, Intel stands at the crossroads.

One leads to a less lucrative business of creating chips for PCs, and the rest to the unknown world of communications and the Internet.

Amid the global economic slowdown and dismal PC sales worldwide, Intel has to find ways to keep going because competition is just waiting to pounce them.

This week, Infotech talks with Ricky Banaag, head of Intel Microelectronics Philippines. Banaag was formerly from IBM.

What is your outlook for the PC industry in the Philippines considering the recent state of affairs in the country? Do you see growth this year or a slowdown?

There is no question that the combination of the global economic slowdown and some measure of political uncertainty will impact everyone. However, the IT sector is among the most resilient in the Philippines. We are optimistic about its future and Intel's role within the Philippines.

Intel Corp. has recently made in-roads in areas outside of its core business. Intel R&D activities, and even investments have recently fo-



BANAAG: "The PC will still be the center of our digital world."

cused on areas like Internet technologies (networking), communications (wireless), next-generation computing, among others. Are these developments in any way designed to help Intel out of the slump of PC sales worldwide?

Intel's core business is silicon and you'll find silicon in mobile phones, networking equipment, servers, personal digital assistants and PCs. It makes sense for Intel to broaden into these areas and to invest in R&D that supports both PCs and communications.

At the Intel Developers Forum in Beijing, Intel indicated that it is going to play big in the wireless

communications space. What's Intel's play in the Philippines?

In the Philippines, our focus is twofold—the first is on great products and the sale of Pentium 4 PCs and Xeon servers, and the second is on ensuring quality manufacturing of PC technology at our Cavite plant. We are certainly involved in wireless through our StrongArm processor and flash memory products and we expect as wireless and new standards such as 2.5 and 3G are adopted across the Asia-Pacific region—that we will have a role in this sector.

Intel Corp. recently announced

that it was slashing prices of chips worldwide. How has this translated to the Philippine market? Should we also expect prices of PCs sold in the local market to drop dramatically?

Intel often reviews its pricing and as a chip ramps up into mass production, we pass cost savings to our customers. It then becomes our dealer's decision whether to pass these savings on to consumers. In many cases, we find that our dealers do lower their prices.

Intel announced that it has allocated \$4.2 billion to R&D activities worldwide. How much will go to the Philippines, if there will

be any?

In the Philippines, the R&D benefits will be seen in the local products we market.

Several local researchers, including the Advanced Science and Technology Institute and the National Institute of Physics, have been conducting research on chip design, and even fabrication. We also understand that Intel has partnerships with local universities. Will we ever see Intel working with local researchers on developing its next-generation chips?

Intel works closely with schools and universities but not currently in the area of chip design and fabrication. Right now, chip design and fabrication collaboration is primarily focused in the US.

Intel recently partnered with United Devices and Oxford University in peer-to-peer computing. What are your plans for the Philippines in terms of peer to peer computing?

Actually, everyone in the Philippines can participate in this program by logging onto the intel.com/cure/ website. It's a great chance for all of us to contribute to cancer research.

How long have you been with Intel?

I have been with Intel for over four years. During this time Intel has significantly raised its profile to convey the benefit of our brand for the PC industry and our vital relevance to the development of PC technology. Part of this was to continue to eliminate the technology gap for microprocessor platforms and to increase the rate of adoption of the latest technologies at the home and SME user segments.

How far has Intel's business in the Philippines evolved since you became country manager? What changes in the organization and the business have you witnessed so far?

We've seen dramatic changes and growth in the time that I've been here. In the last four years, the

Filipino people have started to embrace PCs and incorporate technology into their daily home and work lives. In fact, we see PC literacy and use as important for our children's education and the future of our country.

At Intel we've broadened our business—we're selling PC chips but we're also selling Xeon processors for servers as our country's businesses go online and link further into the Asia Pacific and global economy.

Internally, we've matured our channel relationships and now have a robust Genuine Intel Dealer program. Combine that externally with marketing efforts to raise our brand awareness and you'll see that we're better known, with more products, and more means to get them to consumers, than we did four years ago.

How difficult is it to head Intel Microelectronics? Do you have to be "paranoid" to work at Intel?

Intel has a distinctive corporate culture that continues to reflect Andy Grove's belief that "you have to be paranoid to succeed." If you look at this from the Philippines perspective, it means that we're always looking for ways to improve our products, our service and our manufacturing. There is no question that Intel is an exhilarating and competitive environment to work in.

What will the future PCs look like?

PCs continue to become smaller, lighter and more mobile—reflecting the power-packed impact of increasingly minute PC chips. We can expect the future PC to get smaller, to be able to handle even more applications and to work as an "extended PC," as it's starting to do now, with your PDA, mobile phone and other digital devices that haven't yet been thought of.

Do you see a future without a PC?

No. We see the PC as being the center of our digital world.

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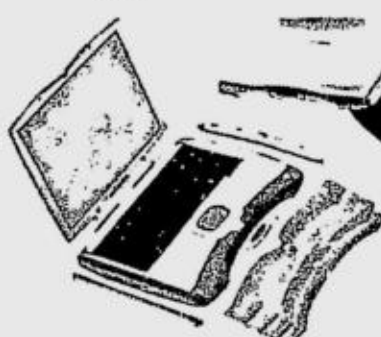


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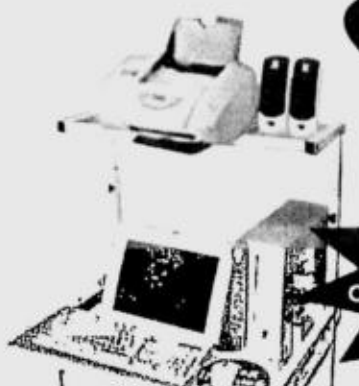


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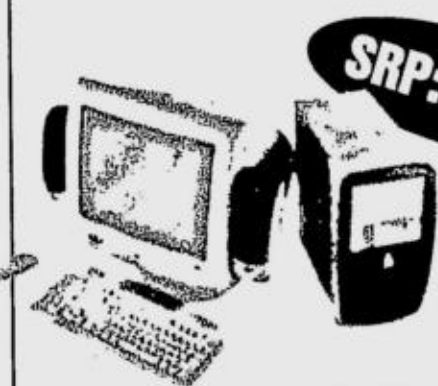


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Our Dearly Beloved DIGNA L. PLANDANO-CASUELA

of Del Carmen, Surigao Del Norte

Peacefully joined her Creator on May 26, 2001 at the age of 90.

Her late husband Mateo P. Casuela (†); loving children and in-laws Fe, Vicente and Leonila Botardo, Luvimino and Corazon Roja, Virginia and Bartolome Monzon (†), Gloria and Roberto Rocha, Florido, Aurora and Simeon Sandoval; grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal rest of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels, Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on May 29, 2001 at the Heritage Park, Bayani Road, Taguig, Metro Manila after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.
 John 3:16

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 Ninth Death Anniversary
 of

LORENZO M. TAÑADA

August 10, 1898 - May 28, 1992

We, his family, lovingly remember him today, we recall some words of wisdom from him and invite you to join us in prayer for our country and our leaders.

"Men in public life are often faced with the disheartening task of making difficult decisions. I have always tried, in my humble way, to stand for principles, to base my actions on certain political ideal even at the risk of political annihilation."

Lorenzo M. Tañada

Please say a prayer for the eternal repose of his soul.

Froilan M. Villegas

October 5, 1933 - May 11, 2001

His bereaved wife EMY L. VILLEGAS; children ROSANNA, MARICHU, ROWENA, ROMINA, FROILAN JR., MARISSA, MYLENE, PAUL JOHN, PAUL ANTHONY, SWEETHEART, SUNSHINE, SUGAR, MICHAEL; grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Capitol Memorial Chapels, Inc., Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on May 29, 2001, 3:00 PM at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina.

"... absent
 with the
 body to
 be present
 with the
 Lord."

2 Cor. 5:8

We know that God raised the Lord Jesus from death. He will raise us to life with Jesus. He will present us, along with you, to God.

2Cor. 4:14

CLASSIFIEDS



Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM

24 May 2001

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Department of Agrarian Reform will undertake a pre-qualification of prospective bidders for the following services:

1. Janitorial Manpower and other maintenance services
2. Security manpower services

Pre-qualification forms and instruction are available at the PBAC Secretariat, General Services Division, Ground Floor, DAR Main Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City. Pre Bidding conference will be held at the HRD Training Center, DAR Compound, on June 1, 2001, at exactly 1:00 p.m. Pre-qualification forms and documents should be submitted to the PBAC Secretariat not later than 5:00 p.m. on June 5, 2001.

Only pre-qualified bidders will be allowed to bid and be issued bid documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (P500.00).

DAR PBAC assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for expenses or losses that they may incur as a result of their participation in this bidding.

The DAR-PBAC reserves its right whether to act or not process pre-qualification documents received after the above scheduled deadline and to waive any defect or minor infirmities in the pre-qualification documents. Similarly, the DAR-PBAC reserves its right to reject any or all bids received without stating the reasons therefore and accept the offer considered most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) JOSE MARIE B. PONCE
 Chairman

DAR-PBAC for Janitorial & Security Services

(PDI - May 26, 27 & 28, 2001)



Republika ng Pilipinas
 Republic of the Philippines
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON, KULTURA AT ISPORTS
 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORTS
 DECS Complex, Morao Avenue
 Pasig City, Philippines

Tanggapan ng Pangalawang Kalihim
 Office of the Undersecretary

NOTICE OF AUCTION SALE

The Department of Education, Culture and Sports is inviting all interested parties to submit two (2) copies of bids in sealed envelope subject to the General Terms and Conditions in the sale on "AS IS WHERE IS" basis. Bids will be received and opened by the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) on June 5, 2001, 10:00 AM at Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Building I, ULTRA Complex, Pasig City, in the presence of the bidders or their duly authorized representatives.

1 unit Motor Vehicle, FORD EXPEDITION
 XLT 4x4 8 Cyl/Indr
 Model 2000
 Color: Black

Bid forms may be obtained from PBAC Secretariat Office, Mabini Building, Room 112-A, ULTRA Complex, Pasig City during office hours.

BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect contained thereto and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) ERNESTO S. PANGAN
 Undersecretary
 Chairman, DECS-BAC

(PDI - May 26, 27 & 28, 2001)

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INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

The NPC GENCO-1 Regional Contracts Committee (RCC) is inviting contractors to Prequalify and to Bid for the following:

PROJECT CODE AND TITLE	SCOPE OF WORKS, TRACK RECORDS & LICENSE/ CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENT
1. SUPPLY OF LABOR, TOOLS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPERVISION OF JOBS RELATED TO JANITORIAL AND SANITATION & OTHER RELATED UTILITY SERVICES FOR BATAAN THERMAL POWER PLANT (2PQ080RCC-006)	The services to be performed by the Applicant shall cover all requirements for the proper upkeep, cleanliness, and sanitation of buildings & grounds. Applicant shall have at least 1-year exp. similar to the requirement and with valid DTI/ SEC Certificate.
2. SUPPLY OF LABOR, MATERIALS/SUPPLIES, TOOLS/ EQUIPMENT & SUPERVISION FOR JOBS RELATED TO JANITORIAL, SANITATION & OTHER RELATED UTILITY SERVICES FOR BATANGAS COAL-FIRED THERMAL POWER PLANT (PQ1000RCC-017)	The services to be performed by the Applicant shall cover all requirements for the proper upkeep, cleanliness, and sanitation of buildings & grounds. Applicant shall have at least 1-year exp. similar to the requirement and with valid DTI/ SEC Certificate.

Application for pre-qualification is open to all Filipino Contracting Firms with valid license and/or business permit mentioned above. Prospective bidders must be able to prove his Experience, Equipment capability as well as his Financial capacity to perform the services called for.

Pre-qualification Forms shall be available for issuance starting May 24, to June 6, 2001 at the NPC GENCO-1 Contracts Management Office (CMO), 3rd Floor NPC GENCO-1 Building, 161 Bonifacio Drive, Port Area, Manila, upon presentation of original copy of the applicant's valid business license and/or certificate mentioned above, together with the Letter of Intent and payment of a non-refundable fee of (per copy):

Item no. 1 - Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00)
 Item no. 2 - One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00)

For purposes of pre-qualification and bidding activities, the following schedules will be observed:

ACTIVITIES	BTPP	BCFTPP
Submission of Prequa. Docs.	June 20, 2001	June 20, 2001
Issuance of Bid Documents	July 23, 2001	July 27, 2001
Pre-bid Conference	July 30, 2001	Aug. 3, 2001
Submission/Opening of Bids	Aug. 10, 2001	Aug. 15, 2001

The NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason; waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is the most advantageous to the Corporation. The NPC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) LORNA T. DY
 Officer-In-Charge, RAFS
 And Chairman, RCC

(PDI-May 24, 28 & 31, 2001)

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1ST QUARTER FIGURES DOWN US economy hobbling along

WASHINGTON—The US economy largely worked through a backlog of unsold goods in the first three months of the year, but the latest reports on manufacturing and the housing market indicate it started off the second quarter on a tentative note.

The Commerce Department said on Friday the economy grew at a 1.3-percent annual rate in the first quarter, down sharply from the originally reported 2-percent pace. Still the report had a silver lining: business inventories were cut back at a sharp rate, easing the build-up on shelves and in warehouses.

But other reports showed the second quarter only hobbling out of the starting gate. Orders for so-called durable goods—expensive manufactured items meant to last at least three years—fell 5 percent in April, while sales of existing homes slumped 4.2 percent.

Those numbers, combined with a decline in employment of 223,000 in April reported several weeks ago, have raised the possibility that further weakness lies ahead for the economy.

"I think the second quarter is going to be weaker than the first quarter. We are likely to see a high-wire act between a recession and a soft landing," said Sung Won Sohn, chief economist with Wells Fargo & Co. in

Minneapolis.

Stocks ended the day down marginally. Both the Dow Jones industrial average and the tech-heavy Nasdaq composite were off by a bit more than one percent. The bond market, which closed early ahead of the Memorial Day holiday on Monday, was mixed, as traders digested the data and mulled a speech that Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan delivered late on Thursday.

A tale of two quarters

The revised first-quarter growth number, while lower than expected, offered cause for cautious optimism. Much of the drag on the economy came from an aggressive slashing of inventories. Companies cut back inventories at an \$18.9-billion annual rate, the first time they had pared them since 1991 and the sharpest reduction in stocks since 1983.

That suggested firms might have worked off enough excess inventories in the quarter to allow them to begin ramping up production soon. The possibility of an inventory "overhang" has been one of the major worries for economic policymakers.

But the durable goods report, also released by the commerce department, showed Corporate America is not yet ready to plunge headlong back into purchasing new plants and equipment.

April's 5-percent decline in durable goods orders was more than twice what had been expected by Wall Street analysts and the weakness was broad-based, with softness even seen in high-tech equipment such as computers and semiconductors.

"Today's news clearly shows that the pace of economic growth will continue to advance at a snail's pace in the second quarter as firms continue to work off inventories, which translates into reduced orders and economic output," said Jerry Jasnowski, president of the National Association of Manufacturers.

And while the housing market, aided by relatively low unemployment and falling mortgage loan rates, has been a pillar of strength in the economy this year, the home resales report released by the National Association of Realtors pointed to some softening. Home sales spur spending on a wide array of goods as buyers rush out to furnish their houses.

Home resales were down across the nation. But the decline came in the wake of high levels of sales in March.

Fed role depends on data

Even as the durable goods and home resales reports raised questions about the economy's path in the current quarter, yet another report—an in-

dex of consumer sentiment compiled by the University of Michigan—sounded an upbeat note.

The index rose to 92 in May from 88.4 in April, raising hopes increasingly confident consumers will maintain spending and continue to prop up the weak economy in the months ahead.

That would be welcome news to Federal Reserve policymakers who, having dramatically cut interest rates five times already this year, have begun to hint they may begin to take a more cautious rate-cut approach.

In a speech Thursday night, Greenspan said, "the period of sub-par economic growth is not yet over" but added that the central bank's previous easings "should be providing substantial support for a strengthening of economic activity later this year."

Rick Egelton, deputy chief economist at Harris Bank/Bank of Montreal in Toronto, said the latest data show it's likely too soon to worry the Fed is set to end its rate-cutting campaign.

"These (reports) certainly suggest we're not there yet," he said.

Richard Berner, chief US economist with Morgan Stanley in New York, said much depends on incoming data, particularly on spending.

"The weakness we see in demand is the critical issue," he said. *Reuters*



FEDERAL Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan answers questions from the audience after he addressed the Economic Club of New York. AP

Some companies gain in slow economy

NEW YORK—Many US companies have found their hands tied when it comes to raising prices amid the plodding US economy, but some firms have used their market domination to pass steeper costs on to consumers.

Internet services provider AOL Time Warner Inc., the publisher of The New York Times and Verizon Communications—all huge stalwarts within their industries—have enacted price hikes recently.

While the increases are far from across the board and their impact on the inflation outlook is minor, they have hit the pocketbooks of many Americans already feeling the pinch of higher prices for electricity, natural gas and gasoline.

The consolidation of US industry, particularly in technology amid the debris of the dotcom bust, has given some companies the increasing clout they need to push through the higher prices.

"The overall landscape in America has been consolidation in many, many industries and there's no doubt that it gives them more license to raise prices," said Susan Mitchell, senior research analyst at marketing research

firm Mintel.

But Federal Reserve chair Alan Greenspan's perception that inflation is not currently a major threat in the US economy does not always resonate on Main Street.

Russ Phelan, a 38-year-old employee at MTV Networks, said he was shocked when he found the price of a movie in New York has recently reached into the double-digits.

"The last thing I remember was that it cost \$7," he said not far from Times Square. "It's pretty surprising that they cost \$10 now, and I know that if I wait two months, it's going to be on television anyway."

Part-time caterer Anita Marshall cited rent, food and gasoline among the items that are costing her more and have crimped her budget lately.

"Everything has gone up," she said. In industries where certain companies dominate market share, the downturn has actually spurred price hikes.

Brawn spells earnings

The New York Times Co. raised the newsstand price of its national Sunday edition in late March by about 19 per-

cent, or 75 cents. The price hike, the publisher's first in five years, irritated Stephen Brobeck and his wife, but they still buy the newspaper.

"The Times is a premium product that many affluent people want," said Brobeck, executive director of the Consumer Federation of America, a Washington-based consumer education and advocacy group.

"Not every company can raise prices in an economic slowdown, but the Times can."

Alan Beckenstein, professor of business administration at the Darden Graduate School of Business at the University of Virginia, said the Times was able to raise prices because it was unlikely another newspaper would pose a challenge.

The Times expects only a "minimal" loss in circulation due to price increases, said company spokeswoman Kathy Park.

The price of getting telephone listings is going up as well. Verizon increased the price of a national 411 directory assistance call to \$1.25 from 95 cents for the New York and New Jersey area on May 15, said Jim Smith, company spokesman. *Reuters*

The price hike, Smith said, will offset costs of operating the service and bring Verizon's rates closer to "fair market price." Since Verizon's 411 service is still cheaper than what most long distance carriers charge, it does not expect to lose customers, he said.

And AOL Time Warner, the No. 1 Internet services provider with 29 million subscribers, on Tuesday raised the monthly price of its unlimited use plan by almost 9 percent, or \$1.95, to \$23.90.

Analysts had predicted the company might raise its rates to meet its aggressive 2001 growth targets amid a slowdown in advertising.

The number of AOL subscribers has more than doubled since the last time it raised prices for Internet services in April 1998, a sign of the clout the company now wields.

Gambling for dollars

AOL also said it was not worried about losing customers.

"We're confident that our members and perspective members will see that AOL is the best site on the Internet," a spokesman said. *Reuters*

PHILIPPINE BANKING

Did you know?



that soon after the Philippines was ceded by Spain to the United States in 1898, *El Banco Español Filipino*, which operated as a Spanish public bank since 1851, changed its nationality and became a Philippine institution?

that the regulation of local banking began when the Philippines became a colony of the United States?

that this regulation was reflected in Act No. 52 of the Philippine Commission which provided that all banks in the Philippine Islands were to be examined by the Insular Treasurer?

that the regulation and suspension of banking activities fell under the American regime's "police power" provision because the US considered banking as a matter of public interest?

that when the US military government took over the administration of the Philippines in 1899, four banks (two local and two foreign) were in operation, and they had total combined resources of P40 million?



AOL, Microsoft in talks to renew pact on browser

NEW YORK—AOL Time Warner Inc. and Microsoft Corp. have been in talks about extending a pact that prominently features AOL's software on Microsoft's Windows operating system, sources close to both companies said Friday.

However, the sources said a deal to renew the five-year pact that made Microsoft's Internet Explorer software the default browser on America Online's flagship service has not yet been reached, even though the original deal expired on Jan. 1 of this year.

AOL continued to rely on Microsoft's Internet Explorer software instead of the alternative Netscape Navigator browser, even after its purchase of Netscape Communications in 1999.

"There are a bunch of things out there that make this much more complex. Anything we're going to talk about has to be in the larger context of the relationship and working together," a source familiar with the situation said.

AOL Time Warner and Microsoft declined to comment.

The discussions are being closely watched because some analysts believe it can redefine the balance of power between the Internet's two dominant forces.

"There is no deal. There's no 'close to a deal' or 'structure of an agreement' even suggested at this point," said the source familiar with the situation.

The original March 1996 deal was crucial in building AOL's market share in the second half of the 1990s, propelling America Online to become the largest Internet access provider with about 29 million subscribers for its flagship service.

The AOL-Microsoft browser deal also was a core issue in the US antitrust case against Microsoft.

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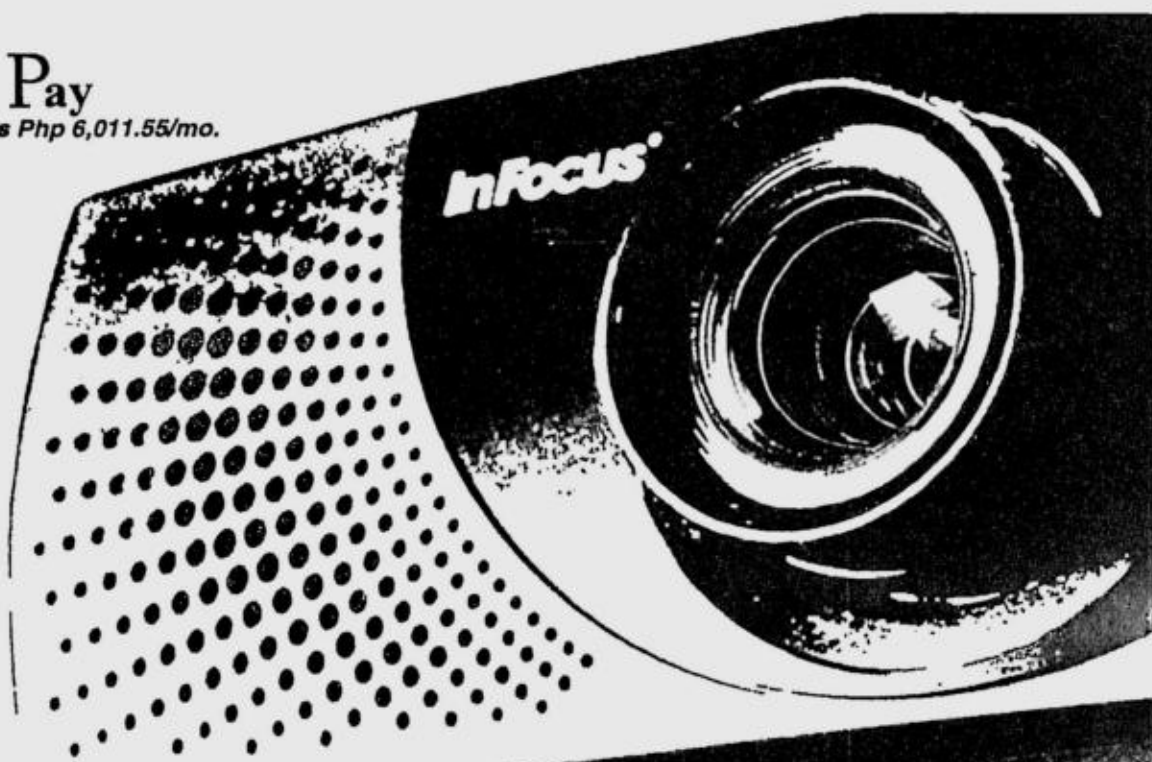
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WORTH \$32 BILLION

Lucent, Alcatel merger set

PARIS/CHICAGO—Transatlantic telecom equipment rivals Lucent Technologies Inc. and Alcatel could agree on a merger worth around \$32 billion as early as Tuesday, providing talks progress over the weekend, sources familiar with the situation said Friday.

Both France's Alcatel and New Jersey-based Lucent are understood to be keeping boards meeting over the extended holiday weekend, a number of sources in Europe and the United States told Reuters.

"If the talks succeed, and it's a big 'if', it could be announced on Tuesday," one industry source told Reuters.

Earlier on Friday, another source said negotiations would push on through the holiday weekend and no announcements should be expected during the weekend. "From the sense that I have, it's not like we're at the point where we're just working through the

semantics. I still think there's a lot of discussion taking place," a source familiar with the talks said.

Both companies have declined comment on what they describe as "rumors."

Alcatel shares closed 6.9 percent lower at 31.95 euros following the news that talks had become very serious, while Lucent fell 13 cents to \$9.40 on the New York Stock Exchange.

Alcatel is considering acquiring Lucent, which has reported a combined \$4.7 billion in losses in the first half of its current fiscal year, for little or no premium for Lucent shareholders, sources close to the situation said on Wednesday.

Alcatel shares have shed 11 percent since talks emerged last week, knocking some 4 billion euros off its market capitalization, while Lucent has been stable. Lucent is currently valued at around \$32 billion, while Alcatel's

market capitalization on Friday was 41.5 billion euros.

Keeping the talent at Lucent

A deal with little or no premium could spark opposition from shareholders who have seen Lucent's stock fall about 85 percent from a 52-week high around \$67 last summer.

"We would be extremely disappointed if Lucent throws in the towel at this level," said Richard Steinberg, president of Steinberg Global Asset Management, which owns 126,500 Lucent shares.

But an Alcatel deal could be the best option for Lucent now, said David Brady, portfolio manager of Liberty-Stein Roe Young Investor Fund.

"I still think it's the best thing for Lucent shareholders at this time," he said, but added there were enormous challenges. "Lucent needs to do something, there's no question about it."

As talks are progressing, the management of the two companies are understood to be addressing awkward issues such as management configuration and fiscal and legal obstacles.

Sources close to both companies have painted the prospective deal as a "merger between equals," but it is more likely Alcatel would emerge as the dominant partner in any pairing, analysts and portfolio managers said.

They said Alcatel chief executive Serge Tchuruk would need to tread carefully or risk chasing off some of Lucent's top executives.

Tchuruk and his top executives would have to walk a fine line between making the hard choices to revive Lucent, which many analysts believe includes cutting products and as many as 20,000 jobs, and assuaging fear among US workers they will be trampled as Alcatel calls the shots.

Hughes' CEO Smith retires

LOS ANGELES—Hughes Electronics Corp. on Friday announced the retirement of Michael Smith, the company's chairman and chief executive officer who has been a key opponent of Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. Ltd. bid to take over Hughes and its DirecTV unit.

Smith will be replaced at the General Motors Corp. (NYSE:GM—news) subsidiary by Harry Pierce who will retire as GM vice chairman to take the job of Hughes chairman. Hughes named Jack Shaw, 62, as the company's chief executive officer.

The move comes as both News Corp. Ltd. (NCP:AX) and EchoStar Communications Corp. are engaged in a struggle to buy Hughes and its DirecTV unit.

Smith, 57, the brother of GM Chairman Jack Smith, had been with GM and Hughes for 33 years and had spearheaded efforts to find alternatives to a News Corp. takeover of Hughes.

GM and Hughes have long appeared to have different agenda for the satellite unit, with Hughes signaling it was much more willing to wait for the right partner who would theoretically offer a higher price than Murdoch and more independence.

"Smith's been the big opponent to the News Corp. deal. He might have been a bump in the whole process. I don't know if he's just tired of fighting with them," analyst Suzanne Betts, with Pittsburgh Research, told Reuters.

"I thought he was doing a good job. Either way, something needs to be done with Hughes because as part of GM, it's not a good fit," Betts added.

On a conference call with reporters, Pearce said that he would ensure that Hughes would look at all the alternatives that could deliver the most value to GM stock. He also said Smith would stay on as a consultant with Hughes. *Reuters*

Goodyear runs tire safety ads

CHICAGO—Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. began running newspaper advertisements on Friday stressing the safety of their tires, just three days after Ford Motor Co. decided to replace 13 million Firestone tires because of concerns about tread separation and blowouts.

While the ads do not specifically mention the recall, they do refer consumers to Goodyear's website, which contains information about the recall as well as a tire safety guide.

Akron, Ohio-based Goodyear said the ads were prompted by the upcoming Memorial Day weekend, which traditionally marks the start of the US summer travel season, and are aimed at preventing consumer confusion about Ford's recall.

When Bridgestone Corp.'s Firestone unit recalled 6.5 million similar tires last August, Goodyear said it had consumers calling and mistakenly asking about a Goodyear recall.

"The ads also are directed at the company's employees and retailers," said Chuck Sinclair, director of communications for North American Tires. "We wanted to send a strong message that we're proud of them for their dedication and commitment to providing quality products and services."

Goodyear, which is ramping up production to provide replacement tires to Ford, ran a similar ad last fall after the Firestone recall. Those ads focused on peace of mind while the current one states "Not everybody had to think about their tires this week."

The ads will run in a total of 18 newspapers, including the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Washington Post, and Akron Beacon Journal, as well as papers in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. Some smaller papers are expected to run the ad Sunday.

Goodyear said the ad is the first developed by its new ad agency—Goodby, Silverstein and Partners of San Francisco.

Ford continues to run advertisements explaining its decision. Firestone, which has been feuding with Ford over the tires, does not currently plan to run any ads, a spokesperson said. *Reuters*

Brazil unveils conservation plan

SAO PAULO, Brazil—Even as its emergency plan to force Brazilians to make 20 percent electricity savings is being challenged in the courts, the government on Friday outlined mandated cuts ranging from 15 percent to 25 percent for various industries.

Pedro Parente, head of Brazil's emergency energy task force, announced the cuts as part of a plan to stave off a collapse of the power grid across huge areas of Latin America's biggest country.

Years of low rainfall have left some reservoirs at record low levels and Brazil's mainly hydroelectric power stations cannot keep pace with demand from its growing economy.

Parente, who has been popularly dubbed the "minister of blackouts," announced in a brief statement that industries producing aluminum, industrial gas, chlorine, paper, cement, sodium and iron alloy would have to cut consumption by 25 percent starting June.

Other industries such as petrochemicals, mining, iron, ore and steel would have to save 20 percent, while producers of beverages, food, textiles, leather, footwear, vehicles and car parts must reduce electricity usage by 15 percent, he said.

Commerce and service industries faced a 20-percent cut, the same reduction as the government had demanded from private consumers.

A federal court in Sao Paulo state dealt the emergency plan its first serious blow Thursday, suspending government plans to punish consumers who fail to cut back with surcharges and power cutoffs.

Under the government plan, consumers who fail to make savings of 20 percent will have to pay up to 200 percent more for their electricity and face power cuts of up to six days.

But a federal court in Marilia, 325 miles west of Sao Paulo, ruled that was unconstitutional. And officials at the Supreme Court in Brasilia agreed, the Agencia Estado news agency reported.

Alcides Tapis, minister for industry, development and foreign trade, warned Friday "there is only one way of solving the problem of the lack of energy and the judges must understand this."

Attending a business seminar in Sao Paulo, Tapis told reporters that "the only thing that is missing is an official declaration that the country is in a state of emergency."

The rationing plan has angered Brazilians. Many complain the government, which prides itself on keeping Brazil's finances under strict control, ignored experts' warning of a looming energy crunch for years.

Now, many fear that rationing could plunge the country into recession and cause widespread layoffs.

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Omnibus Power Bill: A primer

(From page B22)

A: The passage of the bill is a positive signal to investors of the government's economic reforms. Failure to pass the bill in the 11th Congress would be tantamount to "no passage at all." Other developing countries, which are competing for limited funds available in the international capital markets, may attract the investments which otherwise would go to the Philippines.

The New Power Bill seeks to institute reforms that will ensure that our country will have reliable and competitively priced electricity. The two major concepts of the New Power Bill, the restructuring of the power sector and the privatization of the National Power Corp., have been the subject of extensive studies in both the executive and legislative branches of government. The

strategy is to put an end to monopolies, encourage the entry of more industry players and generate competition that will benefit consumers in terms of better rates and services.

Recognizing the urgency to pass the New Power Bill, President Macapagal-Arroyo has directed the executive branch to go on a wide range of consultations with the different stakeholders, especially the civil society. There is a continuing series of consultations and roadshows on the New Power Bill and this primer aims to identify the concerns that were raised in the consultations.

Q: How will the New Power Bill benefit consumers, industry participants and the government?

A: The New Power Bill will bring benefits to consumers in terms of giving them the power of choice

so they can choose which electricity provider will give them lower rates and better service. There will be diversification of ownership for the industry players where greater opportunity for technological innovation and maximum public participation can be enjoyed, to enhance security and reliability of electricity supply. For the government, it will mean a leaner budget and more streamlined operations. The budget for the electricity industry can be used by the government for other vital services such as health, education, agriculture, housing and public works. For the industry players, the New Power Bill will give them the opportunity to enhance security and reliability of electricity supply.

Q: Will power rates go down if the New Power Bill is passed?

A: It is expected that, among

other things, competition between existing and new entrants will drive down the price of electricity. With private sector management of the privatized generating companies, efficiencies are expected to be brought about by a better capital structure and business management. Power rates are also expected to go down because the New Power Bill also provides for a 30-centavo-per-kilowatt-hour mandated rate reduction for residential consumers.

Experience in other countries that have gone through power industry restructuring and privatization shows that electricity rates have generally gone down by 30 percent in real terms. Examples of these countries include Australia, 36 percent; New Zealand, 14 percent; Argentina, 44 percent; and, the United Kingdom, 25 percent.

Q: How will the New Power Bill help our industries become globally competitive?

A: The provisions in the New Power Bill promote competition in the electricity industry. With greater efficiency and removal of cross subsidies, power rates particularly in the industrial/commercial sector, are expected to go down. This will make the Philippines globally competitive and generate more job opportunities.

Q: What other benefits are expected when the New Power Bill is passed?

A: A Consumer Impact Assessment conducted by Navigant Consulting Inc. of the United States, in association with Ian Pope & Associates of the United Kingdom and the UP Economics Foundation, showed that the power reforms will bring down power rates and improve service delivery to consumers. This will allow the market to price

electricity efficiently and the production sector to enjoy efficient prices, which in turn will be reflected in the pricing of consumer goods. For the consumers, this will mean lower prices for the said goods. In the long run, households will find an indirect gain through better allocation of their household budgets. This indirect effect of the production sector on consumers is estimated to reach P27.6 billion.

Q: Will the New Power Bill help improve the fiscal position of the government?

A: If the government continues to borrow on behalf of Napocor or guarantee Napocor's borrowings to finance its operations, total government borrowings are expected to amount to P160 billion over the next five years. But, with the privatization of Napocor, borrowings and guarantees would likely be reduced to P17 billion since the government will be relieved of the responsibility of borrowing on behalf of Napocor or guaranteeing Napocor's borrowings.

Power reform bill GMA's litmus test

(From page B22)

Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino party to rally behind his bill. The party, however, seems more inclined to let the next Congress tackle the measure.

"Is there enough time to be able to discuss sensitive questions that would have impact on the people in the next five years?" Sen. Edgardo Angara, head of the LDP, asked.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, who is aligned with Osmeña but has been one of the staunchest critics of the bill, said despite seven years devoted to turning it upside down and inside out, the Omnibus Power Bill was still a "half-baked legislation."

Another LDP member, Sen. Blas Ople, scored the Macapagal administration for using "scary tactics" to prod Congress into approving the proposed law. He said government statements painting a power crisis scenario were "reckless and irresponsible."

"Congress is responsible and knows what to do with the bill," he said.

Senators considered as allies of the administration are themselves saying they want more time to study the bill.

Sen. Loren Legarda said based on what she was hearing from the people involved, the Omnibus Power Bill was "not exactly in consonance with the pro-poor agenda of the Macapagal administration."

Time to vote, but...

Osmeña is confident Congress will be able to tie up loose ends when it holds its four-day special session.

He disagreed with the need to further study his bill "because the implication was that I did not study it."

"We did our best. I think we cannot do better," he said. "I would like the Senate to approve the bill, but, of course, that's their judgment call and not mine."

Osmeña said he has been meeting with Energy Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho to "iron out certain inputs from the executive department." He said they have reached an agreement on certain "sticky" provisions.

There are, however, some technical matters still left hanging as of this weekend.

The Senate side of the bicameral conference committee has lost two of its members—Senators Teofisto Guingona and Raul Roco. Guingona has been appointed Vice President while Roco has been named education secretary. Two other members of the committee, Senators Francisco Tatad and Ramon Revilla, were, as of this writing, still out of the country. Without these senators, the Senate is unlikely to come up with a report on the Omnibus Power Bill. Without this report, the plenary session will have nothing to discuss.

There have also been misgivings because of Malacañang's decision to transfer Camacho, the energy secretary, to the Department of Finance. Some lawmakers have said they want to know first who will take the helm of the Department of Energy before deciding on the Omnibus Power Bill.

People power

There have also been strong opposition outside Congress. Militant groups like Sanlakas, Freedom from Debt Coalition, Bayan Muna and NGO Forum have vowed to set in motion another "people power" to block the passage of the Omnibus Power Bill.

This bill, they say, is "onerous" and considers it as a symbol of the subtle pressure the country's multilateral and bilateral creditors exert on the government to pass laws that alienate the poor in favor of big multinational corporations.

The Freedom from Debt Coalition has criticized the government for yielding to the "shameless greed" of independent power producers and private utilities that are desperately seeking loans from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

"This power bill was tainted with allegations of bribery and corruption when it was hastily passed in the House of Representatives. This power bill has been unduly influenced at the executive and legislative departments by the ADB, World Bank and the International Monetary Fund on the country's power restructuring program," according to the NGO Forum.

"The interests of these institutions should not prevail over the interest of the Filipinos, who will bear the consequences of the electricity industry restructuring," it said.

What exactly is the Omnibus Power Bill? Why does it provoke such adverse reactions? (To be continued)

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BUSINESS

Power reform bill GMA's litmus test

BY RAUL C. DANCEL
AND CHRISTINE A. GAYLICAN

(First of a series)

STARTING today, Congress will hold a special session to try to approve a piece of legislation that has been over seven years in the making. This bill has outlived two administrations and, until now, seemed destined to gather dust in the dockets of the Senate and the House of Representatives. President Macapagal-Arroyo is pushing hard to make sure she will sign into law as the "Electric Power Industry Restructuring Act" the "Omnibus Power Bill" before the next presidential elections in 2004. She is rallying

all her allies and marshalling all the government's resources to make sure this happens. She has even come out with a television commercial promoting this proposed law as her administration's answer to poverty. Why all the rush and urgency?

Ms. Macapagal considers the Electric Power Industry Restructuring Act as one of the cornerstones of her economic recovery program. She expects it to bring down, through competition, the cost of electricity in the country, which is already the second highest in Asia next only to Japan. This, in turn, should greatly reduce the cost of doing business here

and entice foreign investors to again place their bets in the Philippines and stimulate the economy. The bottom line really for the Macapagal administration is that the money that the country will save from this law will ultimately line the pockets of the poor and

make them extremely happy and satisfied when they next troop to their polling precincts to elect a new set of leaders two years from now.

Energy officials have warned that unless the Omnibus Power Bill becomes a law, the Philippines will experience an energy crisis more crippling than the one that hit it in the late

'80s up to the early '90s. At the time, power outages lasting for over eight hours a day became a common occurrence.

Critics of the Electric Power Industry Restructuring Act, however, are skeptical. They insist that although good intentions are behind this proposed law, its implementation may lead to even higher power rates and inefficiency because it will merely hand over monopoly of the power industry from the state to the private sector.

7 years and a payola

Despite seven years of intense deliberations marred by mudslinging and a "payola" scandal, there are still deep cracks that are preventing lawmakers from reaching a consensus on the Elec-

tric Power Industry Restructuring Act. Some say that the division and animosity are so deep-seated and bitter that four or five days won't be enough to put the issue to rest. Even Malacañang has doubts.

Presidential spokesperson Rigo-berto Tiglao said the President had acknowledged that four days might be too short for Congress to tackle, revise and pass a "fairly complicated" bill.

"It's only a four-day window, at the most five. It would be difficult to extend the special session indefinitely and laws of this magnitude require a lot of deliberation," Tiglao said.

The Senate and the House of Representatives have approved their respective versions of the Omnibus

Power Bill. A bicameral conference committee has been trying to reconcile these versions and is working on a report that it will submit to the plenary session for ratification.

Showdown

Over the weekend, lawmakers and groups opposing and supporting the Omnibus Power Bill have been gathering their forces for a showdown that political pundits say will test how well the Macapagal administration can push forward its legislative agenda.

Leading the supporters of the bill is its principal sponsor, Sen. John Osmeña. Osmeña has been trying to convince his allies from the opposition

POWER/B21

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Omnibus
Power Bill:
A primer

EDITOR'S Note: The Omnibus Power Bill has been one of the most debated proposals to ever reach Congress. Yet, for all the discussions spent on it, the bill has remained a very complicated issue. In the interest of informing the public, the Department of Energy has come up with this primer to answer basic questions regarding the Omnibus Power Bill.

Q: How can the New Power Bill prevent any potential power crisis?

A: Under the 10-Year Power Development Plan, there is a need for an additional 5,000 megawatts for the period 2000-2010 on top of the new generation projects that the National Power Corp. and the Manila Electric Co. have committed to undertake. Without this new capacity, we may expect a supply shortfall in Luzon by the year 2007 and in the Visayas and Mindanao as early as 2004 and 2006, respectively.

The passage of the New Power Bill would open the door for private investors to finance these capital requirements, which neither Napocor nor the government can undertake due to financial difficulties.

Q: What is the difference between the old version of the power bill and the New Power Bill?

A: The New Power Bill indicates that the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo has been responsive to the clamor of many sectors by pushing for improvements in the pro-consumers provisions in the new version of the bill.

The New Power Bill has sufficient safeguards to ensure transparency and competition to protect the interests of the consumers. Likewise, safeguards against monopoly and market domination were strengthened. It provides more room for competition and less chances for sweetheart deals which are gravely disadvantageous to consumers. Even electric cooperatives can hope for better benefits under the New Power Bill where provisions for better opportunity for them to adjust and prepare for the market structure are included.

Such a move would also allow the national government to channel funds intended for the power sector to other basic priorities. The average investment requirement projected for additional generation and transmission facilities is P38 billion annually over the 10-year period. The government can use this amount to build 116,923 classrooms, irrigate 76,000 to 126,667 hectares of farmlands, build 38,000 to 76,000 low cost houses, and construct 4,750 to 6,333 kilometers of road.

Q: What credit facilities will become available to the national government for programmed projects when the New Power Bill is passed?

A: The national government will have access to an estimated \$950 million worth of funds once the New Power Bill is approved. Of this figure, \$200 million will be earmarked for the government's budgetary purposes while another \$200 million will be allocated for Napocor. There is an additional \$550-million loan in the pipeline for Napocor's Leyte-Mindanao interconnection project.

In 1999, the Asian Development Bank and the Japan Export and Import Bank withheld the release of the second and third tranches of the Power Sector Restructuring Program loans after government failed to comply with the loan condition that the power bill be passed by June 1999.

Q: How will the New Power Bill help strengthen investor confidence in the Philippines?

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BUSINESSMonday

MARGIE QUIMPO-ESPINO, Business Features Editor

To be a better manager, go have a baby

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

A DAY in the life of involved parent Annemarie Durbin, country manager of Standard Chartered Bank, starts when 11-week-old Jack Harry wakes up at 4:30 a.m. for his feeding.

And from that time until the new baby goes to sleep at about 10 p.m., Durbin lives on a pace that is generally frenetic and ranges anywhere from exciting to rewarding.

She shies away from the "supermom" description, much more the "superwoman". But by most people's standards, she al-

ready is.

How else to describe a new mother who calls the office to issue instructions the morning after a caesarian operation? This is the same woman who reported for work two weeks earlier than the maternity leave she was entitled to.

The superwoman that Durbin is, she already found herself playing hockey in Hong Kong a month later after giving birth and starting a rigorous exercise routine even a week earlier than that.

A self-confessed fitness freak, she dismisses this simply as a physical challenge that her body had been

used to, having exercised obsessively before maternity and again afterwards.

By 6 a.m. almost daily, she would jog or do aerobic activities to shed a few more pounds gained from her maternity. That is, of course, after having spent half an hour or more playing with Jack Harry.

A quick breakfast by 7 a.m. arms her for a hectic day at work that starts shortly before 8 a.m. From that time until lunch and afterwards, her hours are spent on a series of meetings.

She kidded during the Monday

that she was interviewed that her secretary had put her on quadruple bookings.

Lunch time is again reserved for the baby who had to be fed by mid-day and again by 7 p.m. Durbin vowed to breast feed Jack Harry for as long as she could.

On times that she is on out-of-town trips or even in the office, the super mom makes it a point to express milk for the baby. "I have waited 37 years to have a child and what is the point of having waited if I would not be an involved mother once my baby arrives," she said.

Durbin discovers that her man-

agement skills are now 50 times better as she balances her career with motherhood.

"I am more efficient now and a lot more conscious of time, mindful that I have a little fellow to take care of. Anything that needs to be done and could be done now, has to be done now," she said.

Starting June, Durbin's time management would be put to a better test as she heads consumer banking of Stanchart, a new responsibility for the same salary, she jokes.

If there was one thing that motherhood had done for Durbin's zest

TO BE/ C3



DURBIN

RONY HOMILLADA

Internet CEOs lose their luster in Spain

BARCELONA—Once feted like rock stars, executives of European Internet service providers (ISPs) now attract the following of a Las Vegas after-hours lounge singer.

Shorn of their former sky-high stock ratings, chief executives of Europe's major ISPs were shunned by investors and journalists alike at a technology conference here this week.

Only handfuls of fund managers showed up for presentations by CEOs, and conference organizers CSFB had trouble filling spacious ballrooms.

While the bank stirred the boom-time memories with sailing trips on the Mediterranean and Flamenco dancers at a dinner show in a champagne cellar, investors remained cautious.

"Everyone is just more realistic now. No one wants to put their head out on the chopping block," said one fund manager.

He and other burned believers were flocking en masse to hear not Terra Lycos executive chairman Joaquim Agut or Renato Soru, executive chairman of Tiscali, but rather executives whose firms succeed in doing something European ISPs do not—make a profit.

German semiconductor maker Infineon, software group SAP, and server-maker Cisco packed ballrooms even at 7:45 a.m.

One fund manager slept through a speech by Agut as he ploughed through slides prepared for him by his bankers.

This scene was no different for chief executives of other top ISPs, who had entered the ring of CSFB's three-day tech conference as the sobered, bruised bygone of an era rich in promise and poor in profits.

Soru of Tiscali, Europe's second largest Internet provider behind Germany's T-Online, was wandering around the Hotel Arts unrecognized and untroubled.

Christoph Mohn, chief executive of Lycos Europe, drank alone at an evening cocktail party, the magicians, half-naked fire-eaters and sushi bar courtesy of CSFB stealing all the attention.

Times are a-changin'

A year ago at a different Barcelona conference, the air of hallway dealmaking at the Hotel Arts made venture capitalists seem like charity workers.

Investors were spellbound by the sight of dotcom CEOs. The Internet was a revolution and here were its heroes.

But now, with most European ISPs shedding between 80 and 90 percent of their value, the CEOs are targets rather than titans.

"I don't think we are going to see a return to irrational exuberance anytime soon," said Frank Quattrone, the head of CSFB's technology group told reporters, highlighting an explosion of venture capital money last year that had fuelled ethereal IPO highs.

But some of last year's rhetoric still seeped into the talk of ISP executives.

"The Internet is here to stay and is changing our lives," said Tiscali's Soru. "We want to be Europe's No. 1 player."

European ISPs, swimming in red ink as they struggle to find ways to monetize traffic while their advertisers evaporate, may at last have hit up against something that mergers and bluster will not blow down.

"Now it's time to judge management (of ISPs) by industrial strategy. And the only management and company that stands out (in Europe) is Wanadoo," said Lehman Brothers analyst Tarek Robbiati in London. "The rest are all riding a tiger."

Nevertheless, hardly anyone bothered to wake up at 8 a.m. to hear Wanadoo's CFO explain how his company was going to claim the crown as No. 1 player in all of Europe.

Reuters

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Jeff Bezos, the morning after

SEATTLE—There was a time when it seemed Jeff Bezos could do no wrong.

That was back in the heady days of 1999, when anything that ended with ".com" seemed like a good idea, and Bezos—Amazon.com's founder and the undisputed poster boy of the New Economy—had just been named Time's Person of the Year.

Two years later, Bezos' gamble on Internet-based commerce has taken him and his company on a wild ride.

The Internet boom has gone bust and Seattle-based Amazon.com, now the largest online retailer, has so far survived layoffs and a bruising stock plunge.

The company's gregarious leader, still arguably the biggest celebrity in cyberbusiness, faces a growing list of naysayers, shareholder lawsuits and a Securities and Exchange Commission inquiry into his own stock sales.

And yet, when Bezos walks down the halls of his earthquake-damaged headquarters, you can still hear his signature barking, crackling laugh several rooms away.

He's still a believer.

"I love my job," he says with a whoop. "and I have for six years. I think people believe that the last year must have been a difficult one, and certainly in the stock market it was."

Bezos, 37, contends 1999 was the weird year, and that things are more normal now.

"If you look at the six years that we've been in business, there was only one year that we weren't the underdog, and that was 1999," he says. "We're sort of accustomed to being the underdog."

Then comes another big, barking laugh.

Those who have worked with

him for years say Bezos is unchanged in his immense enthusiasm for his company and its goals.

"He's definitely stayed the same person," says Jason Kilar, Amazon's vice president of books, music and video, who has known Bezos for four-and-a-half years. "He's very self-deprecating, he loves 'Austin Powers,' he's very frugal-minded and he still only has two styles of pants."

Besides Bezos' signature khakis and button-downs, the founder of Amazon.com also still snaps a daily picture as a kind of ongoing historical record.

And although his Amazon holdings are valued at more than \$1.5 billion, on a recent trip to Las Vegas he confessed not only to playing the low-rent \$5 craps tables but to asking the dealer, "Can we get a cheaper table?"

But there are changes. Where he once talked about nothing more than "get big fast," now he says it's time to focus on the "operating efficiency side."

The company that once proudly refused to say when it would make money is now trying to reaching pro forma operating profitability—profitability that excludes costs such as stock options and losses from investments—by this year's fourth quarter.

To do that, Bezos has laid off hundreds of workers—since January the workforce is down 15 percent to some 7,200 employees—and closed a customer service center and a distribution center.

He says he doesn't regret the decision to overbuild, though it has required reductions in a workforce whose exceptional loyalty was largely based on belief in, and love of, Bezos himself.

JEFF/ C3

Repositioning for global competitiveness

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Franco G. Del Rosario



Lessons learned

Now, ask yourself if this company repositioned itself in a timely fashion. We are all familiar with Encyclopedia Britannica. This company has been around for 200 years. In just eight years, from 1990-1998, revenues dropped 80 percent. There was no way it could compete with sales of encyclopedia via CD.

The book set involved about \$250 in printing costs and \$500 sales commission; compared to a unit cost of \$1.50 for CD reproduction.

Let's take a look at another example, Amazon.com. When it emerged in the late 1990s, what was the one sure thing it forced traditional bookstores to do? It forced traditional bookstores to reposition their businesses. In fact, in April this year, American Bookstore Borders announced an alliance with Amazon.com.

What Amazon.com hit upon was a "paradigm shift" by taking the biggest component from the cost equation, its physical product cost.

Acting as brokers, it simply maintains a database of books available from publishers and it is not saddled with inventory costs. By aggregating orders, it obtains volume discounts, ridding itself of receivables and minimizing headcount with its associated related issues, plus sales orders occur 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The lessons learned in these two examples were as follows: first, it is of vital importance to keep up-to-date with technological/Internet developments. Second, it is a must to constantly assess the associated risks and exposures of these developments to the competitiveness of the business. Third, it is imperative to have the courage to identify, validate and execute plans to reposition

the business.

There are experts who say e-business is just mostly hyped due to the crash of dotcom companies. For these "gurus," allow me to again quote Gerstner on why IBM is solidly staying on course with its e-business strategy:

"The collapse of the dotcoms was not a failure of e-business. It was a failure of an overly narrow approach to e-business. IBM has always said that e-business involves more than transforming one part of a company, such as selling directly over the Net. The real payoff involved the transformation and the integration of the entire enterprise, from the customer all the way through the supply chain. There is no shortcut to e-business."

Importance of 'the basics'

To the companies writing their repositioning papers, I encourage them to incorporate "the basics" into their plans. Having the best strategies to reposition your business is useless without the right people who can implement them at the least cost possible, and in real-time!

What, therefore, are "the basics?" Very simple, it is "people management."

People management programs are necessary to ensure the retention of talented and dynamic people. There are three people-related principles I observed over the 12 years I spent in the US with IBM. First, IBM works ceaselessly to hire the right people. They look for people whose personalities allow them to provide excellent service and to fit in well with their leadership culture.

The traits they demand from their people are initiative, sense of anticipation, urgency and teamwork.

With the right people, there will be teamwork. As many take teamwork for granted, they do little to make it happen! Teamwork does not just magically happen in IBM, it is constantly and painstakingly worked on.

With the customer as the primary focus of all of the company's actions, the goal of every organization inside IBM is to have a cohesive

team driven by the client and not by the internal organization. Wherever practicable, IBM tries to put in place linked business plans and shared measurements. This is why IBM considers service to internal customers just as important as to external ones.

Second, a strong emphasis is given on training. Cross-training the staff to increase their abilities to solve customer problems on their own is a key element as well. IBM is largely a mobile workforce but it does not put training as a second priority.

According to Nancy Deviney, general manager of IBM Learning Services, in the year 2000, IBM moved 36 percent of employee training to an online environment providing more than 200,000 employees' just-in-time learning.

Third, the staff is rewarded for their skills in meeting client needs and growing the business through awards that are regular and meaningful, emotionally and materially.

Bottom line, a key ingredient to any repositioning strategy is putting the key strategies such as the product, manufacturing, marketing and distribution strategies, in the same priority level, as the company's people management programs that instill a culture of leadership.

A final requirement for ensuring a progressive culture is a crisp, two-way communication with clients and employees through formal and informal vehicles. It starts with listening to customers and employees, acting properly, responsively and visibly to the feedback.

Paying mere lip service in espousing the leadership culture is not going to cut it. Walking the talk is a must. Clients and employees can easily detect if the leadership culture initiatives do not come from the heart, in which case they become an exercise in futility.

(This article reflects the personal views of the author who is a member of the Management Association of the Philippines and chair of Sharexchange Brokers, Inc. The MAP Secretariat and the author may be reached via mapsec@globe.com.ph)



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Jeff Bezos . . .

(From page C2)

The decision to lay people off was "an incredibly personally distressing action to take, and also clearly the right business decision," Bezos says.

These days, he's also apt to stress his belief in the need to separate Amazon.com, the company, from "AMZN," the symbol of its struggling stock. He maintains that they "are really two completely separate things," and that business is better than ever in 2001, even if the stock price has fallen dramatically.

"In 1999, when the stock was booming, we had 14 million customers. In the year 2000, when the stock was busting, we had 20 million customers," he says.

And, he likes to point out, on a split-adjusted basis, Amazon stock was trading at around \$1.50 when the company went public four years ago and is now at about \$15.

"The problem is, the stock didn't go from \$1.50 to \$15 in a smooth straight line up and to the right," Bezos says with that signature laugh. "That's of course what everybody would like. But instead it went via \$100," with a big spike in the middle.

Investors who didn't buy until later, and who then saw their investments dwindle away to nothing as Wall Street lost confidence in Bezos' business plan, are more skeptical.

Bezos is named in at least three federal lawsuits accusing Amazon of misleading investors by not accurately reporting investment relationships to the SEC. The complaints center on Amazon having allegedly mischaracterized as cash gains revenue based on equity investments that actually resulted in

losses. The company denies any wrongdoing.

Additionally, a group of influential Wall Street analysts are demanding that Bezos and other board members release more specific information about the company's financial status.

Bezos has not responded to their repeated letters, though he defends his board and says he will be happy to answer any questions at a shareholders meeting this Wednesday.

Gary Lutin, an investment banker who helped to organize the analysts' group, isn't optimistic that Bezos will provide the information analysts seek.

"Mr. Bezos himself appears to be a brilliant person, and I would hope he would be able to apply that brilliance to the development of a viable business enterprise rather than stock promotion," Lutin says.

Bezos recently acknowledged the SEC is investigating his February sale of 800,000 shares of stock worth roughly \$12 million. The sale came days before a Wall Street analyst released a scathing report on Amazon. Bezos had seen the report, but says he didn't know when it was being released.

Jonathan Leblang, who has known Bezos since junior high school and manages Amazon.com's Honor System website, says the biggest change he's seen in Bezos has been in his role as CEO, which has evolved as the company has grown.

"I don't really know what the traditional-type CEO role is. We are certainly neither a General Electric or a Procter & Gamble," Leblang says.

"We are Amazon.com, and we have an Amazon.com CEO, which is Jeff." AP



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To be . . .

(From page C1)

for work, it was only to make her more driven and determined. "I drive myself incredibly hard, even harder now," said the Stanchart's boss.

Perhaps, it was to prove that motherhood is not a diminishing force but an inspiring one. And who better talk about inspiration than Durbin who found the best dose with husband Richard and Jack Harry.

Richard is a lawyer like Durbin who had agreed to give up his career to stay with his wife during her Philippine assignment.

"I owe him so much and sometimes I feel I could never catch up and someday I hope I would be able to repay him. Without him, I wouldn't be able to do all these and I wouldn't be as effective as I am now," said Durbin.

A great mind like her, Richard is Durbin's sounding board who

absorbs everything, sometimes even more than he really wanted to know. Richard is also more often at home which makes it easier for Durbin to part with Jack everyday, knowing that daddy is there.

Durbin is starting to take up golf and has revived her tennis lessons. She had enrolled in an interior design program via remote and once in a while, finds time to cross stitch.

She admits to be the type to get bored easily, having been used to a full schedule that after 30 minutes of practically doing nothing, she would try to find something, anything just to get her mind occupied.

But since Jack Harry had arrived 11 weeks ago, the reluctant superwoman and supermom had been way too excited and fulfilled to get bored.

"I am not a superwoman. I am just a woman trying to do as much as I possibly can to make life better for my family and for everyone," she said.

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Competitiveness key to helping the poor



INQUIRER chair Marixi R. Prieto confers with Napoleon Nazareno, president and chief executive officer of Smart Communications Inc.

BUSINESS leaders said that Philippine business had to learn how to be more competitive globally so that it could create more jobs, become the engine of economic growth and do more things to improve the condition of the poor.

"The poor delivered a powerful message at Edsa, Mendiola and the polling booths. This has greatly challenged most of society. For its part, business has to look at itself with merciless eyes to determine where it has failed in uplifting the lot of the poor," said Corazon S. de la Paz, chair and senior partner of Joaquin Cunan & Co., sponsor of the conference with Six Sigma Consulting.

In his keynote address, Ayala Corp. president Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala III said that "the most effective way to ease poverty

is to approach poverty alleviation and economic growth together... since the poor nowadays benefit from growth just as much as everyone else does."

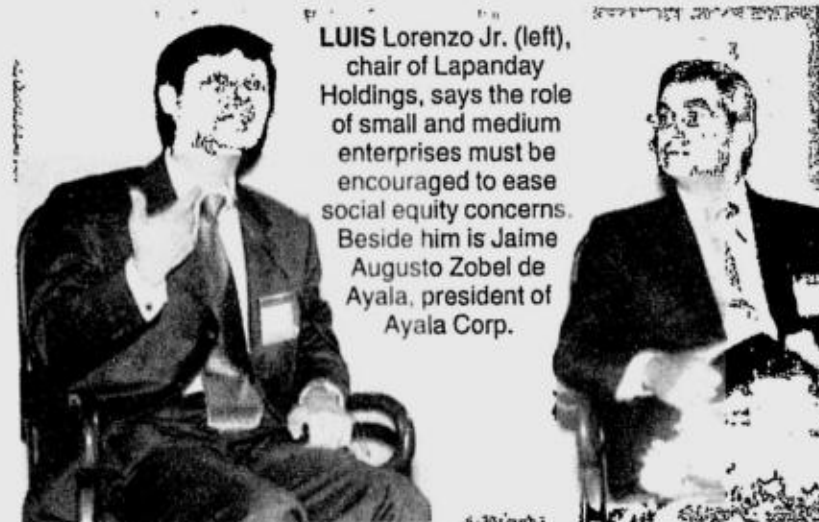
Increasing competitiveness was the main point of discussion in the top-level conference, described as the largest gathering of Filipino business executives since President Macapagal-Arroyo assumed office in late January this year.

The conference was timely considering the release of the report by the International Institute Management Development based in Lausanne, Switzerland.

The report, based on a worldwide poll of senior business leaders, said the Philippines ranked 31st in 1999, 37th in 2000 and 40th this year in terms of competitiveness.



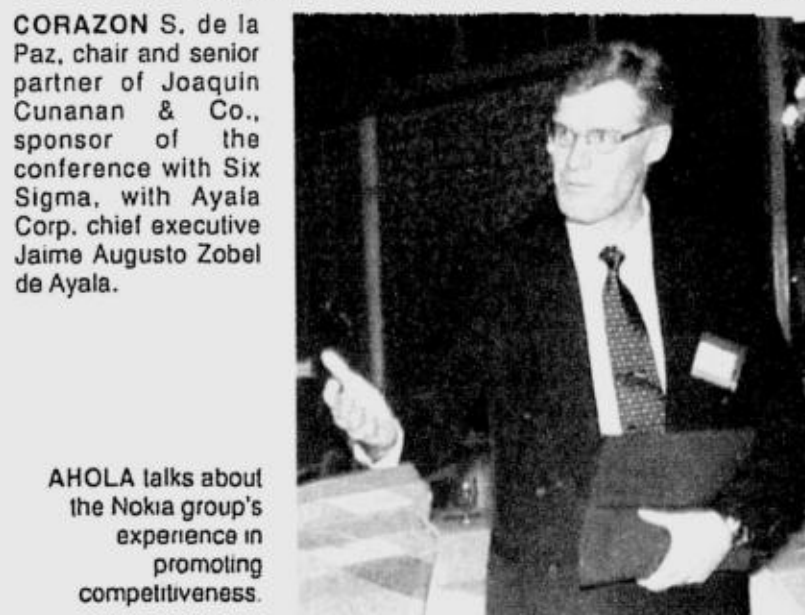
CORAZON S. de la Paz, chair and senior partner of Joaquin Cunan & Co., sponsor of the conference with Six Sigma, with Ayala Corp. chief executive Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala.



LUIS Lorenzo Jr. (left), chair of Lapanday Holdings, says the role of small and medium enterprises must be encouraged to ease social equity concerns. Beside him is Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, president of Ayala Corp.



FROM left: Corazon de la Paz of Joaquin Cunan & Co. with speakers Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, Ayala Corp., Kari Ahola, Nokia; Luis Lorenzo, Lapanday Holdings; Gil Guanio, Software Ventures International, and Franco del Rosario of Six Sigma Consulting.



AHOLA talks about the Nokia group's experience in promoting competitiveness.



KARI Ahola, senior vice president, Nokia Asia Pacific (left) listens to the discussions. Beside him is Franco del Rosario, managing consultant of Six Sigma Consulting.

CESAR Buenaventura of consulting firm Buenaventura, Filamor and Echazuz was one of some 150 chief executives who attended the conference on repositioning for global competitiveness.



PHOTOS BY BEJOY JOHNSON

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Shortage of key skills keep CEOs up at night

‘If times

were

normal,

we would

attract the

best talent.

But times

are not

normal,

and we

are facing

competition

for talent

from every-

body’

—European
media company

CEOs in North America, Europe and Asia report that the greatest management challenges for their companies in 2001 are:

Customer loyalty and retention	37%
Increasing flexibility and speed	34
Competing for talent	29
Reducing costs	29

Clearly, the changing marketplace—with new types of competition, new technologies and constant consolidation—threatens customer relationships, demands greater responsiveness, puts pressure on prices, and requires attracting new types of skills in the face of uncertainty.

But which issue CEOs focus on depends to a great extent on where they sit. And in this case, both geography and industry matter.

By region:

• For North American CEOs—mostly in the United States—keeping the focus on the customer has been the No. 1 management challenge in both years.

• Outside of the United States, this focus on the customer is on the upswing compare with last year—except in Japan.

• For Asia-Pacific and Europe, adopting faster and more flexible methods has emerged as the critical issue, as US-type speed, innovation and responsiveness have led to far better corporate and economic growth rates.

By industry:

The industry sectors split along the cost-versus-talent line.

• On one side are the industries that are intensely focused on reducing costs—manufacturing, energy, trade and natural resources. CEOs in these companies are much less concerned with competing for talent.

• On the talent side of this divide are technology companies and the entire services sector—media/communications, finance, business/professional services and healthcare—industries that are intensely concerned about competing for talent, and far less focused on costs.

How CEOs see

the top three challenges

1. Customer loyalty/retention

The challenge of retaining customers also ranked at the top in last year's survey, driven by the focus of North American CEOs. Its importance has increased in Europe. Most of Asia-Pacific rates it as a top management challenge—except Japan, where it ranks 10th.

‘We'll see some bumps in

the road, as technology cycles

are notoriously fickle for in-

vestors—but those who stay

focused on innovative appli-

cations of new technologies

to solve business problems

will win big’

—Tom Pike
Accenture

Customer Loyalty and Retention

	Ranking	
	2001	2000
Global	1	1
North America	1	1
Europe	4	5
Asia-Pacific	3	N/A
Japan	9	12

CEOs attributed their concerns with customer loyalty and retention to the following key drivers: Consolidation among customers threatens long-standing relationships.

Customers want broader services from the same sources—including access to technology, R&D and innovation.

Branding has become more important in keeping, as well as attracting customers.

Despite globalization, important aspects of most consumer markets and some B2B services remain highly localized.

2. Increasing flexibility/speed

CEOs in Europe and Asia-Pacific are most apt to believe they need to increase their company's flexibility and speed. For Europeans, this has been a top concern for two years—and

it's on the rise in North America and Japan.

Increasing Flexibility and Speed

	Ranking	
	2001	2000
Global	2	5
North America	3	6
Europe	1	2
Asia-Pacific	1	N/A
Japan	1	4

CEOs attributed their concerns with flexibility/speed to the following key drivers:

Customer requirements for quick turnaround, constant access and customized solutions are increasing across the board.

More rapid information flow enables—and demands—faster decisions than many large organizations are used to making.

Keeping pace with new technologies and product innovations is an increasing challenge.

Corporate venture capital offers some great opportunities, but successes may never get integrated into parent company.

CEOs of large, multidivisional companies express concern that their organization structure inhibits flexibility and speed.

Asian business leaders are concerned whether their business, cultural and regulatory systems will allow the start-ups, IPOs, and equity compensation that are hallmarks of Western-style innovation.

Asian CEOs are also troubled by the East-West digital divide at all levels, from consumer access to high-value-added technology businesses.

3. Competing for talent

Competition for talent has become more intense since last year—in North America and especially in Europe, where it's become the No. 1 management challenge.

Competing for Talent

	Ranking	
	2001	2000
Global	3	8
North America	2	4
Europe	1	12
Asia-Pacific	9	N/A
Japan	9	12

But it's much less of a concern in Asia-Pacific, including Japan.

The focus in North America and Europe

seems to be on talent generally, and on leadership in particular:

• CEOs rank developing and retaining potential leaders seventh among the management challenges.

• The exception, again, is Japan, where leadership development/retention ranks slightly higher than competing for talent.

CEOs attributed their concerns with competing for talent to the following key drivers in two categories: people issues and company issues.

‘In our industry, the

speed of technological

change is extremely rapid.

We have to be prepared to

move rapidly’

—Japanese electronics
manufacturer

People issues

• CEOs worry that they don't have the right kind of people for new market conditions.

• In Europe, CEOs in industries other than investment banking and consulting feel that they've been lax in recruiting at top-ranked schools.

• For more and more types of positions, companies compete for talent across industries, not just within their industry.

• Businesses face uphill struggles in finding and retaining local managers with local market knowledge.

• Many CEOs observe that people want to feel a passion for the company's work, to become part of a higher purpose than business results alone, and to balance their work and family lives more effectively.

Company issues

• Top management is spending more and more time on the search for talent.

• IT position remain unfilled and are inhibiting company growth and innovation.

• Demographic realities: There are too few younger workers to replace the baby boomers as they retire.

• Older companies feel that they're out of favor with younger workers.

• Companies need more people who can—and will—work in other countries and cultures.

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Understanding the mind of the Filipino voter

BY DENNIS M. ARROYO

ONCE all the results of the May 14 elections are in, the Comelec will show the full count. But an in-depth research is not possible. You can't tell how many of those who voted for senator A also voted for senator B.

On the other hand, a survey allows one to see how voting relates to many factors other than location. The survey data may show the effects of social class, religion, age, opinion, etc. The view is much more detailed.

So here is a piece on how voters thought last May 14. It is based on a briefing by Dr. Mahar Mangahas, president of Social Weather Stations, on the SWS surveys leading up to the May elections.

General demographics

SWS ran a national survey on April 19-23, 2001 and produced this profile of the Filipino voter.

The middle and upper classes (ABC) made up 11 percent of the population, while the "poor" class D accounted for 69 percent, and the "very poor" class E numbered 20 percent.

The vast majority of 84 percent were Catholics, 3 percent were from the Iglesia ni Cristo, 3 percent classified themselves as Born Again and 3 percent were Muslims. The remainder comprised of Protestants (2 percent), Seventh Day Adventists (one percent), Aglipayans (one percent), Baptists (one percent) and others (3 percent).

Membership in charismatic groups might be worth observing. In the April survey, 2 percent were from the Couples for Christ, 0.3 percent from Singles for Christ, one percent from El Shaddai, 0.4 percent from the Charismatic renewal movement, 0.2 percent from the Prex, and 0.2 percent from the Loved Flock. These were all Catholic groups.

The non-Catholic Jesus is Lord accounted for 0.3 percent of the votes.

The primary language spoken was Tagalog (39 percent), followed by Cebuano (25 percent), Ilokano

(8 percent), Aklanon (7 percent), Bicolano (6 percent), and Kapampangan (3 percent). Other languages were spoken by 13 percent.

What about educational attainment? Here was the distribution:

Up to elementary	28%
Some/ completed high school	34
Vocational/ some college	19
Completed / post college	18
No formal education	1

Accessing mass media

Here are some data on how often Filipino adults accessed the mass media.

Frequency of watching TV

Daily, 3+ hours a day	44%
Daily, 1-2 hours a day	18
Daily, less than an hour a day	6
A few days per week	7
Seldom	24
Never	1

Frequency of listening to the radio

Daily, 3+ hours a day	30%
Daily, 1-2 hours a day	17
Daily, less than an hour a day	7
A few days per week	33
Seldom	33
Never	4

Frequency of reading newspapers

Daily	19%
A few times a week	12
Weekly	8
Not even once a week	52
Never	9

Did political ads help them decide their votes for senator? Yes. Here was the April 2001 distribution:

Helped a lot	38%
Helped somewhat	30
Helped a little	18
Did not help at all	6
Did not pay attention to these	8
Have not seen, heard or read any political ad	1

The SWS exit poll in 1998 also found that half used a sample ballot. One fifth decided their vote on the last day.

Party politics

In local politics, neither the People Power Coalition nor the Puwersa ng Masa was dominant. The SWS April 19-23, 2001 poll asked: "Among the mayoral candidates of your own town, are you going to vote for a candidate affiliated with the People Power Coalition, one affiliated with the Puwersa ng Masa, or one affiliated with neither?"

Affiliated with the PPC	29%
-------------------------	-----



Neither PPC nor PnM 47
Affiliated with PnM 20
How much trust did people have in the political parties?

PPC	PnM
Aware 97%	96%
Much trust 45	42
Little trust 22	24
Net +23	+18

Mature voting

Few would go for bandwagon voting. The SWS April survey asked which of the two statements below was closer to their opinion:

Vote according to one's conscience—82 percent
Vote for the one you think will win—18 percent

Even fewer would go for command voting. The survey asked which of the statements below was applicable to their barangay:

Most people decide for themselves on whom to vote—89 percent
Most of the people here are just told by the leaders for whom to vote—11 percent

Only a few practiced so-called tactical voting. Two statements from the SWS April 2001 poll:

Whether or not he/she is popular, I will vote for the candidate with views closest to mine—87 percent

Because the candidate I like best is not too popular, I will vote for another just to help defeat a candi-

date I dislike—13 percent

The SWS Feb. 22-26, 2001 poll presented this test statement on Church support for particular candidates: "Personnel of any Church should not support any candidate in an election."

Half or 50 percent agreed with this, while 32 percent disagreed and 16 percent were undecided.

Cynical about cheating

However, voters seemed to be cynical. The majority regarded vote selling as excusable.

The SWS April poll ran the test statement, "In an election, it is not bad to accept money provided one votes according to one's conscience."

The majority of 58 percent agreed with this, versus 28 percent who disagreed.

Competence appeared to lose out to money. "In the coming elections, candidates with money and influence will most probably win over candidates who are competent but without money and influence."

The April survey showed 42 percent agreeing with this opinion and 33 percent disagreeing.

The poll revealed that people expected the following irregularities:

Vote buying	48%
Cheating in counting or dagdag-bawas	29
Flying voters	26
Harassment	16

The election mattered

The people felt that their votes mattered. The same SWS April 2001 poll asked respondents to agree or disagree with this statement: "Together with the votes of other citizens, my vote has a big influence in determining what kind of government Filipinos will have."

A large 72 percent agreed with this, while 9 percent disagreed, for a net score of +63 percentage points.

The April survey found that the people were eager to vote. An overwhelming 94 percent said that they would surely vote. Only 4 percent said they would be doing something else, and one percent said they would definitely not be able to go to the precinct. (Send comments to dmarrayo@hotmail.com)



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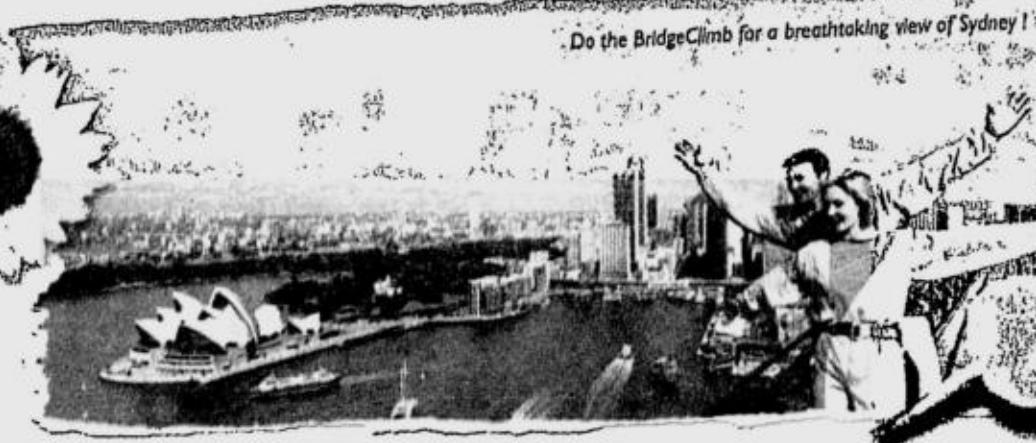
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Internet commerce slump likely to be temporary

WASHINGTON—A slump in US Internet retail sales in the first quarter of 2001—the first drop since statistics on e-commerce were collected—does not signal an end to

growth in the sector, analysts say. Statistics from the commerce department earlier this month show first quarter Internet retail sales fell to \$6.994 billion, down 19.3 percent

from the fourth quarter of 2000, when sales topped \$8.6 billion. Although e-commerce, sales were up 33 percent from a year earlier, the report marked the first quar-

ter-to-quarter drop since the government began tracking activity in 1999. Moreover, the government said that e-commerce as a percentage of

overall retail sales dipped to 0.91 percent from 1.01 percent in the prior quarter. But analysts say that despite the pullback, online sales are likely to

keep growing at a strong pace. "The doom and gloom over the state of online retailing has been greatly exaggerated," said Heather INTERNET/ C12



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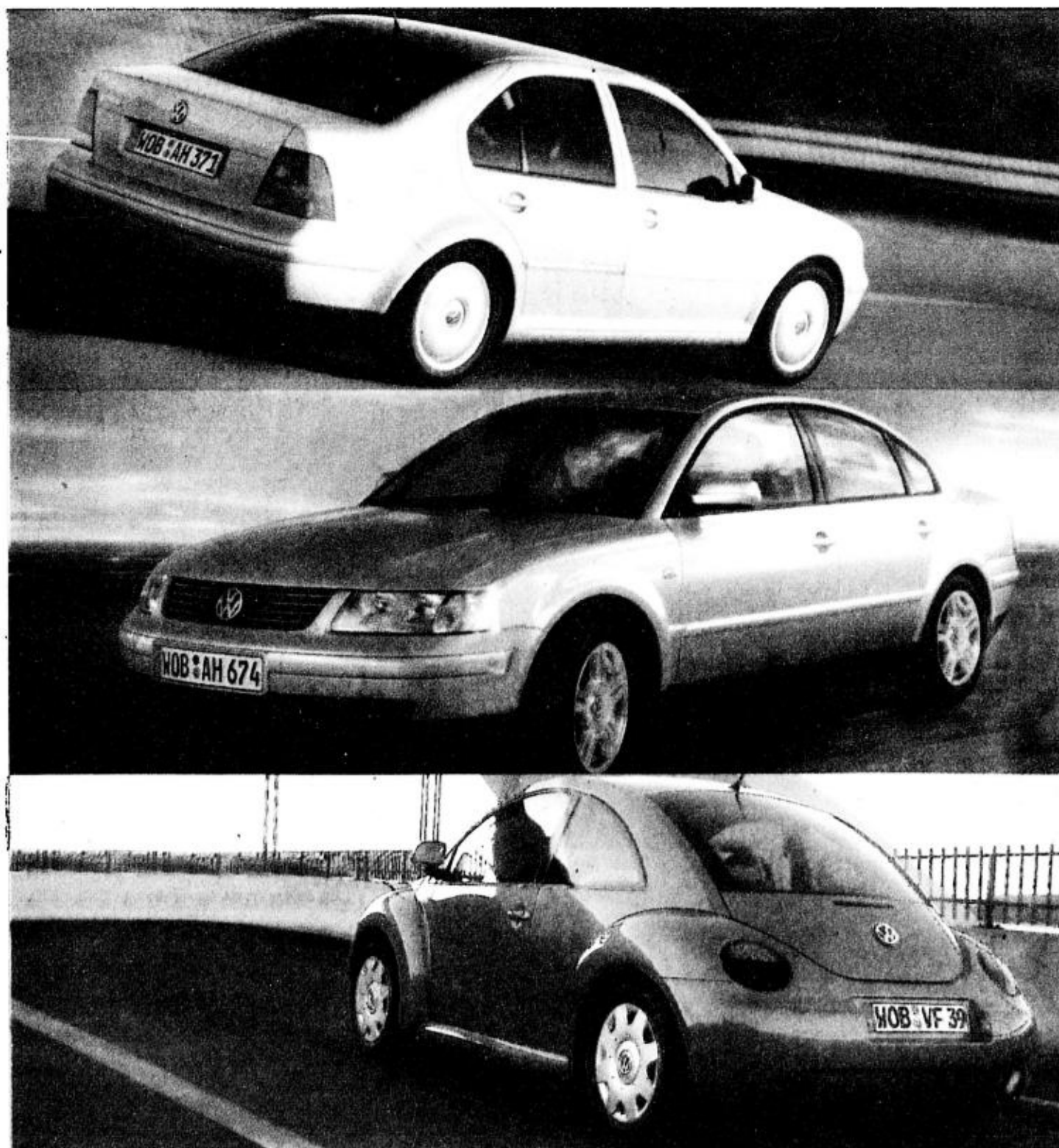
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1586 Series of 2001

SMEs need to comply with labor standards in global market

UPGRADING of industrial relations and human resource management practices in SMEs to comply with minimum labor standards is a must as the global market is increasingly discriminating against those who are unable to meet world-class standards.

This was the conclusion from the study of Dr. Rene Ofreneo, professor at the UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations, on "SMEs, Globalization, HRM and Social Accountability."

According to the study, many SMEs have poor record of compliance in the area of labor standards.

This is the main argument raised by organized labor against the government promotion of SMEs through subcontracting.

They see subcontracting as a disguised attempt to follow transitional corporations and big domestic corporations to casualize labor, weaken unionism and avoid the correct payment of certain obligations to the workers such as minimum wage.

Records show that in 1999, about 51 percent of establishments inspected by the Department of Labor and Employment were found to have violated labor safety and standards, and about 19 percent did not pay the correct minimum wage.

Ofreneo asserts that the labor compliance issues point to a difficult problem area among SMEs—the lack or the absence of professional industrial relations or human resource management system in many of the SMEs.

He relates that a big number of SMEs really started as one-person or a family enterprise, with only the immediate members of the family as employees. When these enterprises started expanding, they did their hiring on an ad-hoc basis, meaning hiring based on an as-needed arises without any prior orientation on labor laws and professional personnel policies.

Some did not even have 201 files for their employees. Many of the SME owner-managers are also personnel managers, the treasurers-comptrollers and security officers all rolled into one.

According to Ofreneo, many SMEs have no problem paying for the added cost of compliance with

minimum labor standards and yet they are not able to because they started their businesses without any proper orientation on what their social and labor obligations are.

Numerous SMEs, Ofreneo points out, are barely surviving. For these SMEs setting up a professional IR/HRM system is the least of their priorities as it entails additional expenses. Confronted with complaining employees who file cases at the DOLE, some SMEs do not even hesitate to close down their operations.

It is against this backdrop that one can appreciate that the so-called labor problems of many SMEs is a complicated one.

"Undoubtedly, there are SMEs which understand the labor laws and still violate them. But there are also many SMEs which are unable to comply with labor laws because the founders-owners lack training and proper orientation on two basic things—one, that business has a social and labor responsibility and two, like the big enterprises, SMEs must put in place a system to handle employer-employee problems in a professional manner," Ofreneo emphasized.

For SMEs, the thrust of the International Labor Organization is the development of restructuring strategies that maintain the human resources and energies of the enterprise by giving adequate attention to the human and social side of restructuring and by showing how jobs, decent jobs, can be created and sustained through higher productivity schemes and better organization.

"Necessarily, such restructuring or adjustment schemes for SMEs must take into consideration the appropriate establishment of sound IR/HRM practices," Ofreneo said.

At first blush, the ILO decent work initiative has vague practical value to SMEs. But it has ILO's concept of "decent work" simply means not only the creation of more jobs of higher quality which reaffirm the dignity of working men and women everywhere.

"Decent" means the observance at least of minimum labor standards.

PNF

Henry Sy mixes the old with the new

TAIPAN Henry Sy has changed not only the face of the country but the Filipino lifestyle as well with his malls. With about 10 malls all over the country, Sy is not about to stop and has earmarked P20 billion in 10 years to open 10 new malls or two a year.

Last Thursday, he opened a new one that tries out a new concept—that of a supercenter or hypermart. Sy actually used both terms in his new venture, the P750-million SM Supercenter in Sucat. Supercenter is the term used in the US while hypermart is the term in Europe for the combination of a supermarket and a discount store. It is a grocery with fresh produce and select department store goods.

There is no department store in the supercenter, explains SM senior assistant vice president Millie Dixon, but there are other shops. And the supercenter contains things usually found in the department store.

The supercenter has 100 tenants, 80 percent of which are open. Parking slots total 1,000.

Another supercenter will be opened in Davao come November, says Jeffrey Lim, SM Prime Holdings Inc. vice president for finance and administration. Next year, two malls—Bicutan and Cagayan de Oro City—will be opened.

Other supercenters lined up are in Calamba, Cavite, Batangas and Cabanatuan.



HENRY Sy gives some serious insight to INQUIRER chair Marixi R. Prieto.



THE EMPHASIS is to provide both wet and dry goods in one store.



AFTER the Mass where more than five priests attended, June Bernabe, Felicidad Sy, Bishop Jesse Mercado, Ed Zialcita and Henry Sy, open the supercenter.



ONE of the characteristics of a hypermart is a prepared food section which sells ready to eat food.



ANOTHER must in a hypermart is a fresh seafood section.



POLITICIANS will always have to be present in the openings of new establishments—newly elected Parañaque Rep. Ed Zialcita and Vice Mayor June Bernabe.

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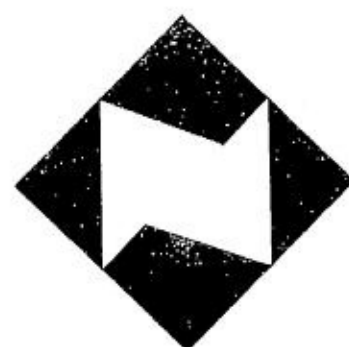
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Asians confident on level of privacy of bank accounts

SINGAPORE—Asians believe that there is a high level of privacy in their bank statements or bank accounts, including Filipinos.

This was based on the results of MasterCard's Asian Ideals survey on the issue of privacy. A total of 5,521 consumers in the Asia-Pacific participated in the survey conducted last December which was a follow-up on MasterCard's earlier Asian Ideals survey issued in March.

Approximately 60 percent of the survey respondents from the Philippines give a score of "6" or higher when asked to rate the privacy of personal information kept at the bank. Twenty-two percent give a middle score of "5" and only 19 percent have some apprehension on the privacy of their bank accounts.

Consumers in Malaysia (36 percent), India (32 percent), Thailand (27 percent) and Indonesia (24 percent) believe their banks provide "total privacy" ("10" on the privacy scale) for their bank accounts. On the other hand, 23 percent of Japanese rate privacy of bank statements quite low, giving a score of "3."

The Asian Ideals survey shows that consumers generally don't feel secure in the Internet. A majority (56 percent) give a score of "4" or lower when asked how safe they feel about releasing personal information on the Internet. One out of five (20 percent) say they feel "absolutely unsafe" ("1" on the privacy scale).

Filipino consumers have mixed feelings about privacy and security on the Internet. More than one fourth of the respondents (27 percent) give a middle score of "5" and almost an equal number of respondents believe the Internet is safe and unsafe—37 percent give a score of "4" or lower while 36 percent give a score of "6" or higher. Fifteen

percent say the Internet is "absolutely unsafe" and only one percent say it is "totally safe" (a score of 10).

The Asian Ideals survey is the only one of its kind in the region. It began in the third quarter of 1996 and has been conducted bi-annually since. The survey, undertaken in December 2000, represents findings conducted in 13 markets in the Asia-Pacific region comprising: Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand. The last survey was conducted among a sample of 400 or more consumers in each of the thirteen countries/territories listed above except China, where 600 interviews were carried out (200 in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou). A total of 5,521 respondents were surveyed.

The Asian Ideals survey has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus four percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level.

MasterCard International has a portfolio of payment brands in the world. More than 1.7 billion MasterCard, Cirrus and Maestro logos are present on credit, charge and debit cards in circulation today. An association comprised of more than 20,000 member financial institutions, MasterCard serves consumers and businesses, both large and small, in 210 countries and territories. MasterCard is the leader in quality and innovation, offering a wide range of payment solutions in the virtual and traditional worlds. MasterCard's award-winning "Priceless" advertising campaign is now seen in 81 countries and in more than 36 languages. In 2000, gross dollar volume exceeded \$857 billion. MasterCard can be reached through its World Wide Web site at <http://www.mastercard.com>.

Farmer co-ops struggle with new challenges

CHICAGO—Once formed as a way for the "little guys" to improve their marketing power against large corporations, farmer-owned cooperatives are reinventing themselves to survive in the rapid competition of modern agribusiness.

"It's about creating value," said Peter Goldsmith, a University of Illinois economist. "Cooperatives are finding they can be more equal partners in the economy."

Whether it's a co-op like Ag Guild of Illinois growing high-isoflavone soybeans for the health food market, a group of Nebraska corn farmers who are building a new ethanol plant, or a Wisconsin food cooperative supplying eggs to McDonalds, new co-ops are looking for survival in special niche markets.

For new and old co-ops, the push to survive sometimes even means partnering with the large corporations once kept on the other side of the fence, all in the name of capturing better returns for products as they try to move up the food chain.

"A perfect example was when Farmland united with Premium Beef to form National Beef Company to provide value-added products like ground beef already browned," said Todd Duvick, food industry analyst with Bank of America. "It's a way to compete with publicly owned meat processors."

Such alliances between co-ops and corporations are becoming more common as the biggest co-ops come to look more and more like the biggest private firms.

Economies of scale in agriculture, and demand for capital, have made "bigger is better" a strategy promoted by the government and driven into every sector by corporate mergers.

Co-ops have been shaped by the same forces. In 1999, there were 3,466 farmer-owned co-ops compared to 3,791 in 1996.

The biggest co-ops in the United States include many household names—Riceland, Gold Kist, Land O'Lakes, Ocean Spray.

They are constituted as profit-making, profit-sharing businesses which, through affiliations, have put the biggest in the same ranks as the Cargills and Conagras of the food chain.

The biggest farmer-

owned co-op, Kansas City-based Farmland Industries, has 600,000 "farmer-owners" in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Last year it posted sales of more than \$10 billion for grains, meatpacking, fertilizer manufacturing, oil refining, sales of Ag chemicals and other activities.

But its breadth demanded ever more capital, and the 4-year depression in US farm prices left it exposed.

So last month, debt-laden Farmland let Archer Daniels Midland take control of its 24-grain elevators in exchange for lease payments and profit-shar-

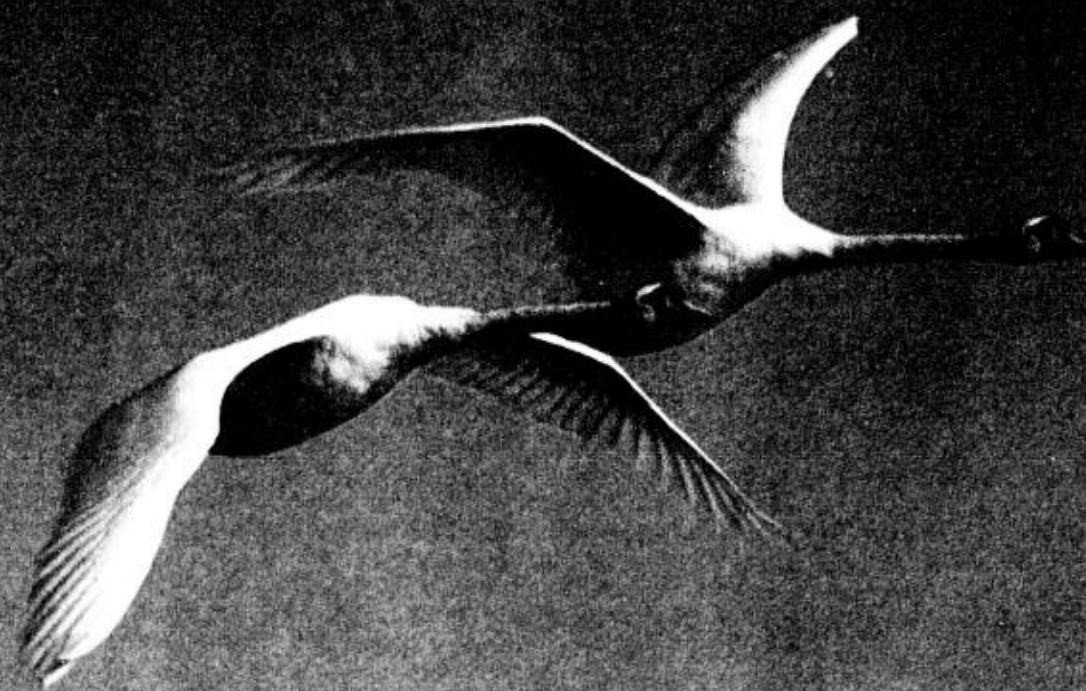
ing on the grain handling. The deal was the latest in ADM's policy of "partnering" with co-ops to secure a steady flow of raw materials for its more than 350 grain processing plants. Other ADM deals include links with big Midwest farmer co-ops Growmark and Country Mark as well as Canada's United Grain Growers.

"The grain business is inherently a capital-intensive, low-margin business that under current economic conditions Farmland cannot continue to operate indefinitely," Farmland CEO Bob Honse said in announcing the venture with ADM.

Reuters

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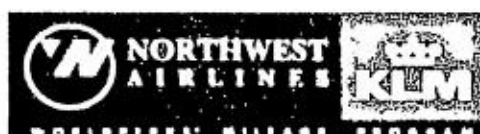
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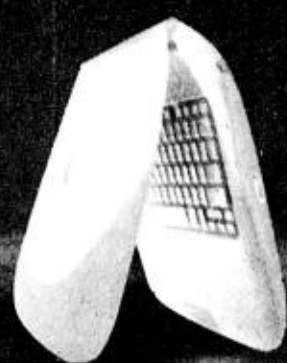
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Events-reminder service for busy people creates new Net venture

FROM subscription to advertising to public listing, the Internet has dangled before a new crop of entrepreneurs the prospects to creating wealth out of nothing more than a bright idea. But with dotcom shares listed on the Nasdaq board going into an unprecedented tailspin since last year, venture capitalists and the business community at large have begun to re-assess the promise that the World Wide Web is a bottomless pit of gold.

Anyone undertaking an e-venture has to square up to two daunting trends—first, that the countless dotcoms have virtually closed shop, and second, that the stock values of the ones that remain operational have reflected low profit expectations.

Entrepreneur Bobby Q. Wong Jr., however, remains undaunted as he launches Schedules.com (www.schedules.com), an event reminder service that allows subscribers to request for reminders for important events through e-mail and mobile phone (via SMS-text).

The website consolidates thousands of public events categorized into business, campus, entertainment, arts, shop and dine, and nightlife. It also accommodates inputs of personal events such as meetings, birthdays, and when bill payments are due.

"All that is happening with web companies these days does not change the importance and the usefulness of the Internet. It only means that some people who speculated on getting rich quick with Internet stocks lost their shirts. The business community is only beginning to understand the business opportunity and profit potential of the Internet," explains Wong. One thing for sure, Wong says, is that the Internet will be harnessed to address real life needs. Real life needs, in fact, are what motivated him to create Schedules.com.

Schedules.com is a website that is useful to

busy people. It is a service that will remind people about important public and personal events way, way ahead of time. Those interested only need to sign up for free to access this service. Site users can surf through the calendar of events at Schedules.com, choose events they are interested in and ask to be reminded about them. Furthermore, they can request to be reminded a few days, a week or even a month before the event will take place.

There are two ways of receiving reminders. After sign-up, the subscriber is given an activation key via e-mail, the site's main reminder route. Realizing how the cell phone has become an important accessory to today's text generation, Schedules.com has given subscribers the additional option of receiving reminders through their mobile phones.

"We believe we have an excellent product because we are offering event organizers real value. Schedules.com allows these organizers to reach and, more importantly, remind a very focused market segment which already expressed very high interest for a particular event," reveals Wong. Without a doubt, the effectiveness of this business model points back to the primordial requirement of generating crucial traffic. In simple terms, that means enticing hundreds of thousands of users to visit, sign up and use the website, thus provide event organizers with a substantial pool of potential walk-in visitors and participants for concerts, trade fairs, seminars, and other promotional activities.

Wong is full of optimism. And he should be. With products such as Schedules.com, e-businesses can hopefully erase the stigma of unrealized potentials and finally turn in a profit by offering products of value in the real world.

Technology now causing market to shift behavior

CONVENTIONAL marketing wisdom is being turned on its head by rapid advances in technology, says the marketing head of the Smart Communications Inc. These days, it is technology that is shaping markets and changing consumer behavior.

"Time was when marketers researched what their target markets want and then packaged an offer that is designed to meet those wants, said Anastacio R. Martinez, head of the personal communications and mobile services division of Smart.

"Now, you will be left behind if you continue to follow this consumer-led type of advocacy. For now, technology drives customers to soon realize how easy and fruitful life becomes with them," he said in his speech at the 32nd national conference of the Philippine Marketing Association this week.

Martinez cited the experience of Smart in developing its GSM cellular service over the past two years. From zero in April 1999, Smart has since built a subscriber base of over three million as of March this year. Technology-driven marketing has played a key role in Smart's success, according to Martinez.

"Technology is now what causes markets to shift behavior," he said. Technology has now become the ultimate driver of markets, more than just "an enabler of firms to reach their target markets."

This, Martinez said, is what pushes the people at Smart to develop "killer applications and killer environments" for the company's mobile value-added services.

He cited the wireless portal Smart zed and Smart Money, the world's only cash card linked to and managed through a mobile phone, as examples of the cellular company's "killer apps."



ANASTACIO Martinez says gone are the days when researchers studied what their target market wants, now its technology which drives consumer needs.

Smart zed offers a wide array of mobile services from business to entertainment to sports to general information for market segments like the next generation yuppies, power executives and 21st century moms.

Smart Money is an electronic wallet that can be used for everyday purchases at Mastercard Electronic establishments, for remote payments and for transferring cash values from one Smart Money card to another.

Last year, Smart introduced about a hundred different mobile data services ranging from horoscopes to news and traffic information to ring tones and logos and vehicle tracking services.

These services are accessible either

through text messaging or wireless application protocol (WAP). The company expects to offer another hundred new services this year.

"We do not feel any inhibition in developing such technologies which for the most part cost almost nothing. This is what Moore's Law postulates, 'everything having to do with digital technology gets relentlessly faster, smaller and cheaper,'" Martinez said.

Good marketing segmentation has also proven to be a key factor in enhancing Smart's GSM market. The company's flanker move of marketing Smart along with Talk 'N Text, a service of sister-company Piltel, has enabled the cellular company to build its GSM subscriber base even more rapidly.

"The entry of Talk 'N Text while simply a reseller of Smart has not at all cannibalized Smart's market. Smart continues to grow strongly in subscriber acquisition as does Piltel. In 2000, Smart and Piltel, specifically Talk 'N Text, together accounted for roughly 50 percent of the GSM market," said Martinez.

Smart's GSM post-paid service is branded as Smart Gold while Smart Buddy is its prepaid service. Both target the upper end of the market.

Piltel's Talk 'N Text is positioned to address the mass market, particularly the people in the provinces.

Smart started in 1994 by offering an analog cellular service, opting for a tried and tested technology that enabled it to rapidly roll-out its network and offer reliable and inexpensive service. This enabled Smart to become the country's largest cellular company by 1997.

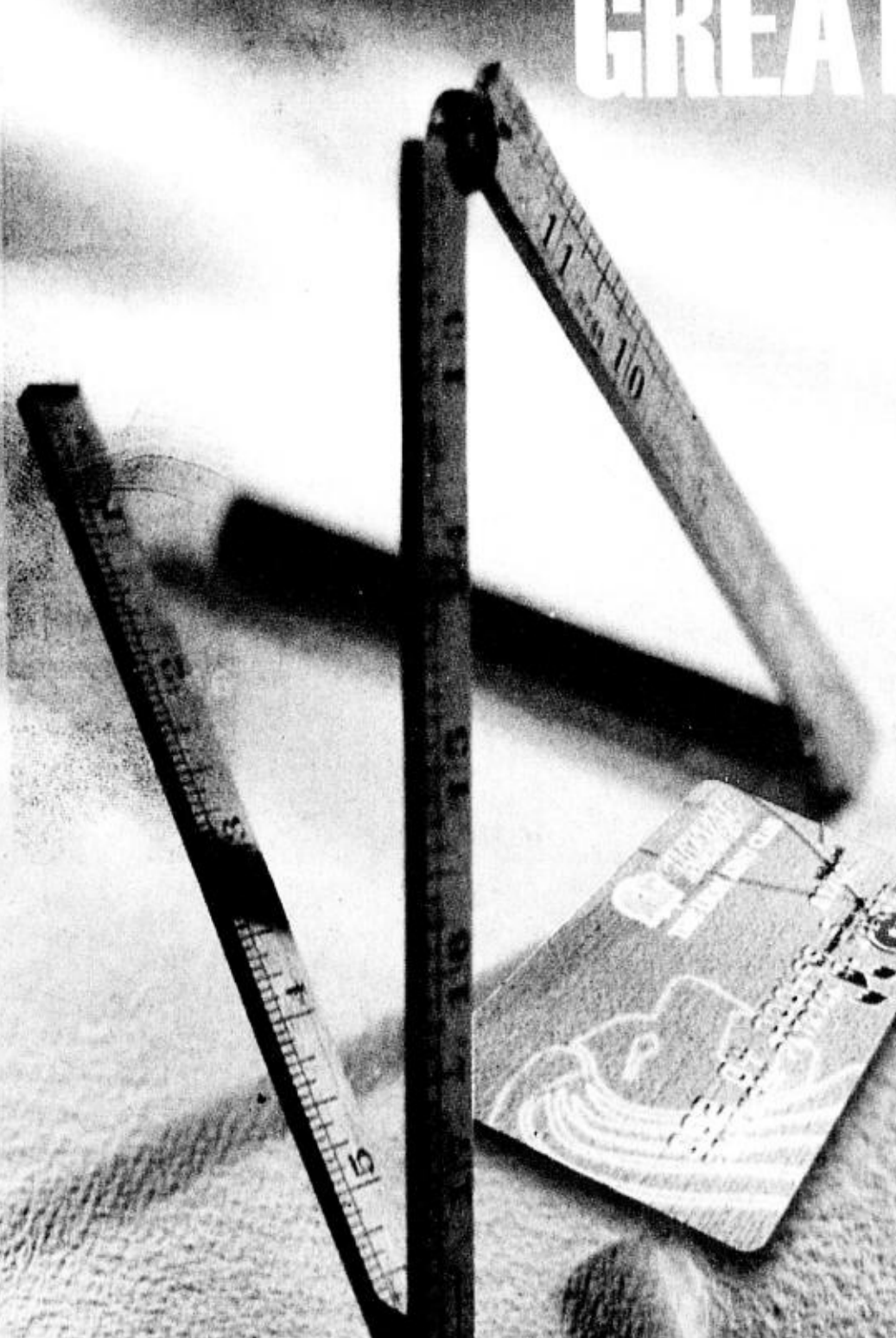
In building its GSM business, however, Smart has taken the technology route and worked to establish its leadership through innovation in wireless services.

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Bank turns planting trees into a venture

UNITED Coconut Planters Bank is introducing another innovation that could pave the way for a more sustainable reforestation effort by the private sector throughout the country.

Starting next week, the bank will start planting cash crops such as coffee and pepper in between the hardwood trees at its 81-hectare reforestation site in Barangay Boso-Boso in Antipolo, Rizal.

The initial planting of the cash crops will be done by employees of the bank, its subsidiaries and its affiliates during the annual environmental climb organized by the UCPB-CIIF Foundation, which is implementing the program.

"In three years time, the crops should generate earnings that will help defray our maintenance costs and sustain the project for the long-term," says UCPB-CIIF Foundation president Edgardo Amistad.

Amistad notes that the lack of funds has been the bane of most reforestation efforts in the country.

The UCPB Reforestation Program, which is now on its 12th year, is being implemented inside the watershed that protects the Marikina River, an important source of water for Metro Manila's residential and industrial use. The only one of its kind in the country to be operated by a private corporation without any funding support from the national government or any foreign agency, the UCPB Re-

forestation Program is considered the biggest purely private initiative of its kind and one of the most successful reforestation effort in the country.

Mr. Amistad said that as of the first quarter of 2000, around 42,000 hardwood trees of various species have been planted on the 81-hectare site. He added that of the total land area, around 33.3 hectares have been declared as totally reforested by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Since 1989, when the program started with only 20 hectares, UCPB has been shouldering all the developmental costs. According to Mr. Amistad as the program expanded over the years, the bank hired a full time forester to oversee planting and maintenance work on the site year round.

It has also established an on-site nursery to produce planting materials. To date, the nursery has produced 60,000 seedling of narra, mahogany and other tree species.

The UCPB Reforestation Program has already garnered two recognitions. In 1995, it received a special citation from the DENR for its important contribution to the country's reforestation effort. Then in 2000, it won the highly coveted Asian Banking Awards as the best environmental project by a bank in Asia.

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There are now more women execs than men

MEN may find this hard to believe, but the State of the Philippine Population Report 2000 (SPPR) shows not only that more women are now joining the labor force; they are also occupying the top positions.

The SPPR cites the 1998 National Labor Force Survey of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). In 1998, there were 1.32 million women occupying executive, managerial, professional, and technical positions compared to 1.1 men in the same positions. Although the labor force is still male-dominated, women are progressively gaining ground.

Is this trend a manifestation of women-power or a sign of the times? A little of both, maybe.

The SPPR attributes this trend to the decline in fertility among women in their reproductive ages. From a fertility rate of 5.1 in 1983, the figure is now down to 3.7. This means that women usually have four children in their lifetime.

With fewer children, women have more time to pursue careers outside the home.

"Low fertility rates are correlated to

reduced incidence of illness, resulting in fewer absences or work disruptions. Married women with fewer children are less likely to leave the labor force and will, therefore, gain more experience," states the SPPR.

Population experts credit the concerted effort of government and private sector and the support of international funding community for the decline in fertility. The massive campaign to inform women about the different forms of contraception and their availability helped women realize the need to plan their families according to their ability to care for their children.

While fertility rates are going down, the SPPR calls for sustained efforts to reach couples and encourage them to plan their families because a further decline in fertility is needed.

Lower fertility is directly associated with the improvement of the quality of the work force, thereby addressing the problems of unemployment and underemployment. Lower fertility also enables government to provide quality basic education for its citizens.

The SPPR noted that half of those

unemployed only reached high school and they were mostly young people between 15-24 years old. Those who are unemployed are mostly young, inadequately educated, and untrained. Many of those lucky enough to be employed accept wages lower than what is mandated by law.

The quality of the work force results in low productivity and poor impact on the economy. "Over the period of 1980-1986 for instance, the growth rate of labor productivity has not gone beyond 2 percent. There have been several episodes of negative growth rates," according to the SPPR.

The SPPR calls for a more aggressive measures to address the interrelated concerns of population growth and socioeconomic development.

"To sum up, the policy framework recognizes the interdependence of population and development. Population variables influence development and the latter influences population. This suggests an approach to population management, particularly fertility regulation, that integrates family planning, reproductive health and rights, and gender equality," ends the SPPR.



WORLD Apparel Market Fair. Lumen Rodriguez of Europhil, Wilman Bayani of Multi-Link Apparel, Hazel Chong of Blue Bell Commodities, Romy Borillo of the Philippine Commercial Attache to Belgium and Willie Lim of Multi-Link Apparel at the fair held at the Brussels Exhibition Centre in Belgium last month.

Business leaders, Microsoft execs to discuss technology at annual summit

REDMOND—The dotcom boom may be over, but demand for technology remains strong, Microsoft chairman Bill Gates told about 130 business leaders Wednesday at Microsoft's fifth annual CEO summit.

In fact, Gates said, "I think this next decade will be the big one."

Pioneering e-commerce sites like eBay and Amazon.com are going to be around for a long time, he said, because they're reliable and customers know what they can expect from them.

But the waning of the dotcoms has altered the high-tech investment landscape, Gates said.

"Some of the mania about this has really changed."

Looking ahead, he said, software programs that link computers, telephones and communications devices will change the way business is conducted, bringing improvements in entertainment and in productivity.

Gates said development of broadband links to speed access to the Internet continues to be slow. Because of that, and because of broadband's high cost, Gates said he expected many people to continue to use phone-line connections to the Internet for the next few years.

Attendees included Disney's Michael Eisner and home-and-garden guru Martha Stewart.

While those at last year's session, amid the height of the dotcom mania, might have been a little uneasy, people at this year's summit might be marked by a sense of relief or even smugness, said outgoing Microsoft chief operating officer Bob Herbold, one of the hosts.

Instead of touting flashy Web site promotions or money-losing e-commerce plans, CEOs are more likely to decide how to use technology in practical ways.

Herbold cited electronic airline ticketing and online brokerage houses as examples of companies using technology to save money and make customers happier.

Although many big

businesses were no longer feeling quite the same threat from start-ups, Herbold said com-

petition worries were also likely to come up at informal meetings throughout the day.

"Another thing in the minds of CEOs is: 'How are my competitors using these tech-

nologies for improving, and am I doing enough?'" Herbold said. AP

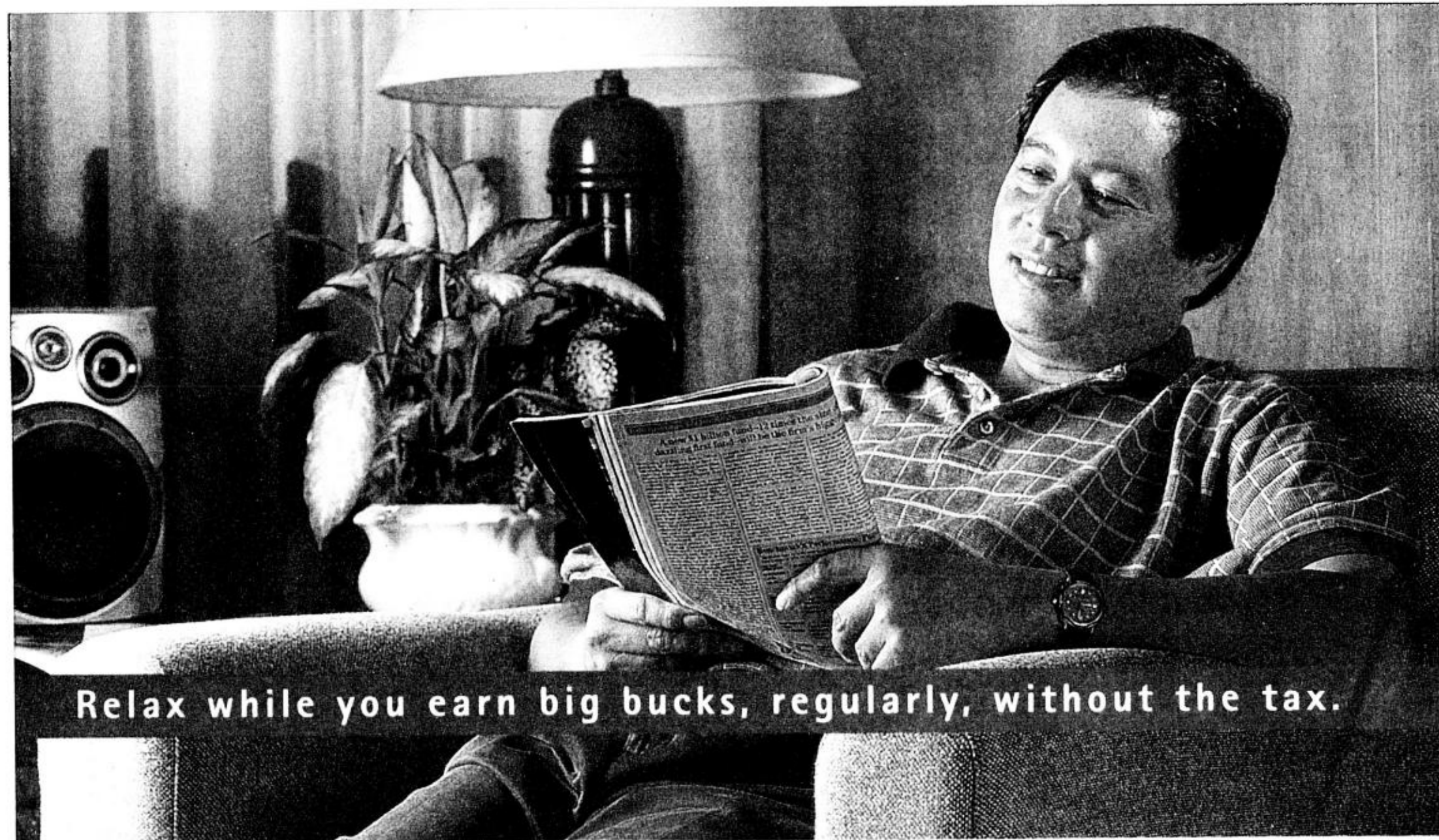
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Wrong sales pitch keeps foreign investors away

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

LIP service.

This was how a glib, Filipino-American information technology specialist described the Board of Investments' renewed drive to make the Philippines a major provider of back office operations to US companies.

Rey A. Buzon, president of Ajonet Holdings Inc., said that even with a new management team led by Wall Street investment banker Vincent Perez, the "BOI still hasn't got what it takes to sell the Philippines."

After a year of scouting the Philippine market for offshore outsourcing opportunities, Buzon has gathered interesting insights on tapping and selling Philippine opportunities abroad.

"The Philippines is lagging behind its neighbors in attracting foreign investors not because of poor delivery or customer service. It's not even that we have a lower quality of labor here. The government and the private sector just do not know how to sell the Philippines," Buzon said.

Buzon cited the BOI's strategy of creating 20 strike teams within the agency that would study investment opportunities in the country, package potential projects, and target key foreign investor groups that would be interested in these areas.

Perez, a partner of New York-based Lazard Freres Co., said the strike teams would go directly to potential investors with detailed investment proposals in tow unlike before when BOI agents usually wait for any investor who would take a fancy on the country. "This is a fine strategy employed by New York firms. The problem is can the BOI find four to five people with the right expertise for each team? Big US companies, like IBM, with thousands of talented employees have difficulty building

strike teams because they don't have enough people."

"The guy (Perez) is a successful investment banker, a job which involves raising funds. This is entirely different from attracting investors to a country or matching a client's needs with a supplier's capabilities. It's a tough job to ask investors to visit the Philippines even if it is the President's residence," Buzon said.

In marketing the Philippine infotech capabilities to US companies, Buzon said one should first identify the strengths of the Philippine companies and match it with the requirements of American firms.

"Find out where the niches are and sell to them," Buzon said.

On one hand, Philippine infotech startups should be trained and developed to achieve the skills required by US companies. On the other hand, the target US companies should be clearly classified in terms of their needs and funding capabilities.

So unless the BOI proves that it has the capability and the will to take this path, Buzon said all of the BOI's moves would remain as lip service.

Buzon said the Philippines can go head-to-head with India, the world's IT leader, in getting infotech jobs and deals from the US. Except for India's much bigger population, Buzon said there was no reason for the Philippines to trail in the infotech race.

India is ranked No. 1 in offshore outsourcing because of the big marketing push by their government and their private sector. They are adept in math, which is crucial in programming. Like Filipinos, they also speak English.

But Buzon said the Philippines could match or better India in all of these key factors. "We speak better English than them because they have this very heavy accent which some American companies don't like."

Buzon is the main man of s2s or Strategic Sourcing Services Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of publicly listed Ajonet, which scouts the Philippines for promising infotech companies that can meet outsourcing services to US companies.

"We call them the best of the breed vendors specializing in Web construction, ap-

plication and design," he said.

Just like in San Francisco, Buzon sees s2s' role as accelerating whatever direction the government is going to in developing the infotech industry.

A son of Filipino immigrants in San Francisco, Buzon earned his stripes as a Tactical Communications Specialist for the US Marine Corps before he spent more than a decade in the IT business.

He designed and managed software programs and trained IT personnel for top American companies such as Bank of America, Cisco Systems and Office Depot at America's digital infrastructure company, Compucom.

s2s, which boasts of US-trained program managers and US-based product managers, estimates that demand for offshore outsourcing by US companies would grow to \$61 billion in 2003 from \$9.5 billion in 1999.

"We'd be happy with just .01 percent of these contracts," Buzon said.

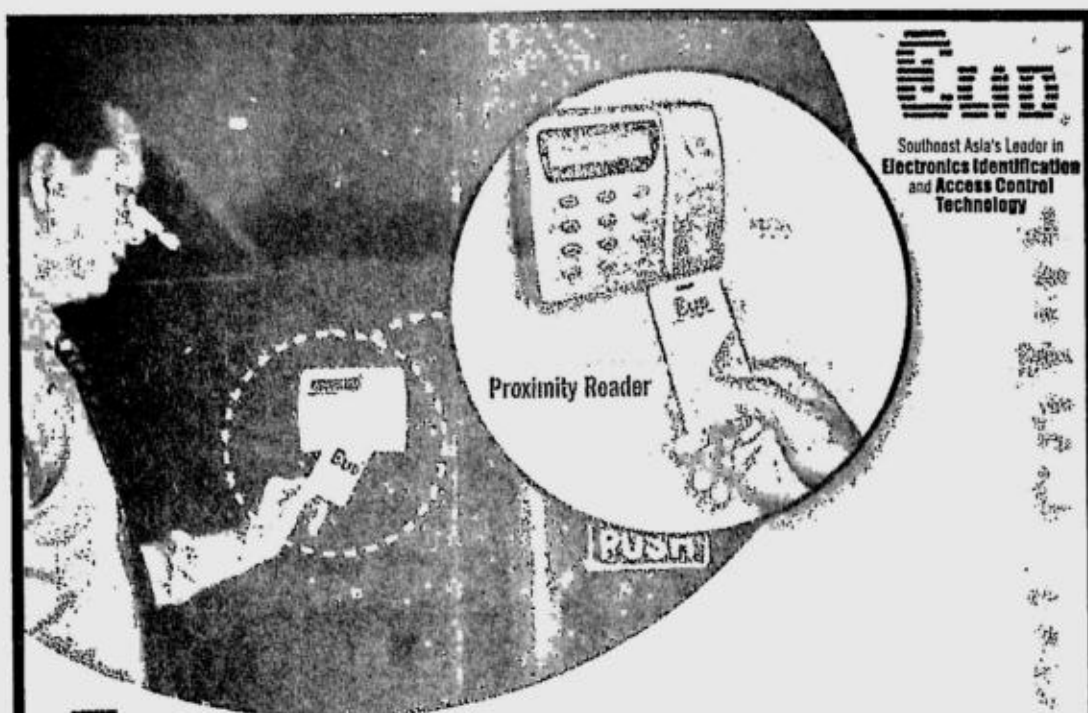
US firms are looking to tap third party providers for their infotech requirements to reduce operating costs; improve company focus; and free internal resources for other purposes. Buzon said companies outsource because they believe that other companies could do the deed more efficiently at lower costs.

The growth in offshore outsourcing among US companies are being driven by new technologies that have made it easier, cheaper and faster to communicate anywhere in the globe.

The depth and quality of services in developing countries sometimes exceed American supplier standards.

US firms look beyond their shores, particularly in Asia, for infotech jobs that are more technical or industry-type (such as number crunching and encoding) because these sectors were still growing in the region unlike in the US.

In developing best of breed infotech companies, s2s prefers equity rather than cash for its fees in giving consultation and getting clients from the US. But unlike a venture capital model, Buzon said s2s would only be a passive investor in the company with a specific exit data and price.



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Blast fishing can be stopped by something more powerful.

Internet commerce slump likely to be temporary

(From page C7)

Dougherty of Jupiter Media Metrix.

"While short-term market factors have slowed the pace and shifted the playing field toward multi-channel retailers, the long-term outlook is still positive. Retailers and their constituents must not lose sight of the fact that the online purchasing population continues to grow and their comfort with the channel continues to increase."

Jupiter has only slightly lowered its projections for US e-commerce sales, and now sees \$34 billion in online sales in 2001. It also forecasts online retail sales will reach \$104 billion in 2005 and \$130 billion by 2006.

Darren Allen, an analyst for the research group eMarketer, says the first quarter sales figures are "respectable, given the turbulent economic conditions of the three months and that, historically, it is a quarter that sports much sharper revenue declines."

Allen notes the first quarter is typically a time when consumers pull back after the holiday season to pay their bills, and that the Internet sector may now be seeing that seasonal pattern.

International Data Corp., another market research firm, says the potential for Internet commerce remains staggering in the United States and globally.

IDC sees global e-commerce sales—including business purchases—surging to \$5 trillion by 2005, up from \$354 billion in 2000, or a 70 percent compound annual growth rate, as the number of Web users rises to nearly 1 billion.

"With the dotcom-stock crash and US economic doldrums so much in the news, it's easy to lose sight of the explosive growth in Internet usage and commerce taking place below the surface," said John Gantz, IDC's chief research officer.

IDC said the United States now accounts for 46 percent of total e-commerce sales, but that with other regions seeing stronger growth, the US share will fall to 36 percent by 2005. It said the Asia-Pacific and Western Europe regions would see the fastest growth between 2000 and 2005.

"More than 100 million new users come onto the Web every year, and corporate volume purchasing over the Web is just getting cranked up," Gantz said.

"Add to that the proliferation of mobile phones and other Internet access devices that will allow people to access the Internet anytime, anywhere, and you have a scenario for explosive growth."

AFP

Public opinion.



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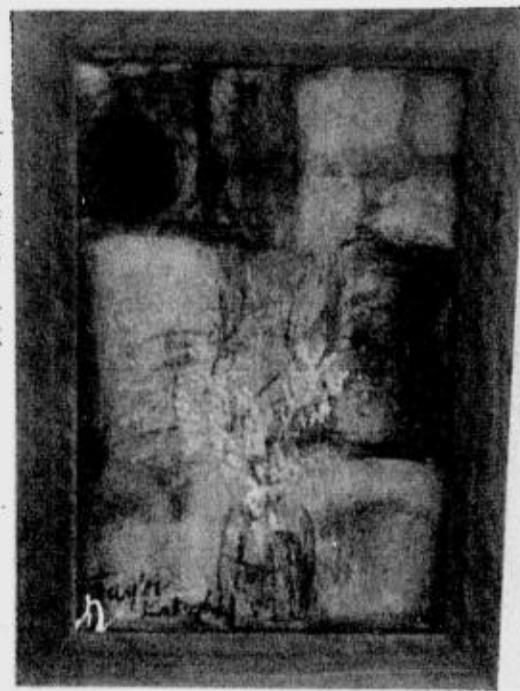
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GRACE TAYLOR-KATIGBAK

An artist's purging, a woman's liberation

"MOTHER, Son & Lady Susan," oil, 40" x 48"

BY NATH LIBARIOS RONDINA

GRACE Taylor-Katigbak descends from a lineage of beautiful, strong-willed women. During the American period, her maternal grandmother, Pura Villanueva Kalaw, fought for the Filipina's right to vote. Her aunt, Pura Kalaw Ledesma, founded the Arts Association of the Philippines and was muse to the country's best artists. And though she would much rather be a woman without a history, her ancestry has now become her own artistic destiny.

AN ARTIST'S/p.D2

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INTERIOR, Taylor-Katigbak Gallery, Tagaytay

An artist's purging, a woman's liberation

(From page D2)

and manifests itself in a tenor as brazen as it sure-footed.

Liberative moment

There is in Taylor-Katigbak's work a homage to the liberative moment, to minds and bodies and objects that collide in unbounded space. Her colors are strong, tempered to the exact, minute point where sufficiency meets excess. Her lines flow freely, even imperfectly, but not without purpose. She captures the human form in moments of introspective bliss or utter abandon with graceful wit. Her floral compositions exhibit a mature com-

plexity that explodes into a free-spirited, uncontrollable arrangement of blooms that defy spatial and temporal dimensions.

But it is in her thematic explorations that Taylor-Katigbak achieves artistic fulfillment. At once deeply emotional and cerebral, her works echo a triumphant exaltation of lives partly lost, partly won, but all well-lived. Here, she draws from her own, as well as her ancestry's brushes with despair and salvation, from her enraged solitude as a writer, to her tempestuous ballet dancing days, and the loves she lost and found in between.

"Muted Bride," a haunting por-

trait in oil, is a creative reincarnation of her *lola's* cause against women's silencing and the social confinement in which women find themselves. "Women are constrained to conform to a body, to a veil, to a symbol, to an image," she laments. In the same breath, "Chastity's Fire," a nude portrait, is as provocative as it is sensual and pro-

pounds the artist's poetic inquisition: What is virtue without passion?

"Mother, Son & Lady Susan" is a lullaby on canvass, serene in its simple hues, sentimental in its totality. Still, "Wings without Feathers," also in oil, speaks not only of Taylor-Katigbak's own becoming, but of the universal challenge that

is itself evolution.

Taylor-Katigbak claims to enjoy the measly wages she gets from selling her paintings more than she does the millions of pesos she gets from her real estate business, including Villa Pura, which she envisions as Tagaytay's premiere art hub. "Art humbles you not only when you sell your work, but more

so when you expose yourself, your soul, your anguish, your joys to people's judgment," she says.

"In the end," Taylor-Katigbak philosophizes, "one's truth is measured by her happiness." By her own expressions of exuberance, it would seem that this woman has finally found peace not just in her truths but also in her destiny.

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BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Gladys Knight, John Fogerty, Billy Vera, Dionne quintuplets, Rudy Giuliani
Happy Birthday: Be ready to take advantage of opportunities coming your way. The choices may seem somewhat overwhelming, but if you choose quickly and don't take on too much, the road to success will be smooth. Your superb ideas and discipline are so much greater than in the past. Lean toward the most suitable projects, not necessarily those offering the greatest challenge. Your numbers: 15, 24, 35, 39, 47

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You can convince others to help you by instilling confidence and self-assurance in them. Competitive sports will enable you to rid yourself of pent-up frustrations that are causing you grief.
TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You will be stubborn and difficult to get along with. Blaming others would be the easy way out, but this time I'm afraid you'll find yourself all alone. You will live to regret your actions.
GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Enjoy visiting friends or relatives. Family outings will be informative. You'll discover surprises about your background that will open your mind to new ideas and directions.
CANCER (June 21-July 22): Heated arguments with children will lead to changes in your home. Drastic reactions to others will be detrimental. Be careful whom you lend money to. You must not make hasty decisions.
LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Love connections can be made. Your colorful way of entertaining everyone will attract all sorts of potential mates. Be careful, or you may pick the wrong person.
VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't worry so much about what others are up to. Concentrate on making yourself the best that you can be. You will learn a lot if you spend time with children.
LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Someone you really cared about in the past may sail back into your life. Don't be too eager to let this person back into your life. Take your time and get to know him or her all over again.
SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): If you judge others harshly, you can expect to be judged in return. You need to put energy into your own work, instead of dissecting what everyone else is working on.
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't hesitate to follow up on your desire to travel, and plan your vacation early. Just the thought of going away should improve your emotional well-being.
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Go over the fine points of a financial investment that you're interested in. You can save yourself some cash and disappointment if you make a couple of changes in your favor.
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Partner problems are causing you grief, and the more you try to correct the situation, the worse it gets. Back off and decide if it's your fault. This dilemma may not be fixable.
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You can get ahead if you take action and accomplish as much as possible at work. Your creative ideas will be well-received by colleagues and superiors.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Movie dog
- Energy food, for short
- Roof overhang
- Quahog
- Parma's state
- Ingenious
- Designate
- European defense assn.
- City on the Moselle
- Incidents
- Start of Ambrose
- Bierce quote
- Performs
- Mine find
- Part 2 of quote
- Five before six
- chi ch'uan
- Office pool members
- Falco and Brickell
- Country's \$ output
- Steps to cross a fence
- Alarm bell
- Mad reversal?
- Sault Marie
- Part 3 of quote
- Ritzy rock
- Appendectomy reminder
- End of quote
- Serangeli predators
- acids
- Pete of baseball
- Dark blue
- Gaseous element
- Whistle blast
- Vandyke site
- Fork part
- Place a stake
- Gun Will Travel

DOWN

- Complexion problem
- Serb or Croat
- Domesticated
- Recompense
- Agree
- Expression of discovery
- Actress Moreno
- Child's injury
- Pleats
- Swiss river
- Henry King of England
- Nights before
- Medical fluids
- In addition
- Table scraps
- Loot
- Bard
- Provide with property
- Psychoanalyst Wilhelm
- Brahmanist
- Do-over tennis service
- Baked turnover filled with kasha
- Conductor Sir Georg
- Appear
- More E than S
- Monotonous in rhythm
- Puppy feet
- Putin's rejection
- Cane cutter
- Code of silence
- Vote against
- Sapper's creation
- Infield cover, shortly
- Famed tentmaker
- Italian beach
- Part of
- High time?
- Okinawa port
- Tel. Jaffa
- 'Auld Lang'
- Bar fly

By Alan P. Olshwang
 Huntington Beach, CA
 4/11/01

SATURDAY PUZZLE ANSWER

B	I	Z	E	T	B	E	C	K	S	L	A	P
E	N	O	L	A	O	S	H	A	H	A	L	L
E	C	L	A	T	A	P	E	R	A	N	T	E
S	H	A	N	T	Y	T	O	W	N	C	A	A
M	A	S	S	E	D	L	O	S	S	A	S	K
A	U	T	H	E	L	S	E	O	M	A	S	A
T	R	E	A	C	L	I	M	P	A	L	A	S
H	A	N	N	A	N	A	N	O	R	O	U	T
G	R	A	N	T	P	S	E	U	D	O		
H	U	G	H	E	S	W	E	E	K			
U	S	I	A	S	H	A	N	D	Y	G	A	I
M	A	G	I	J	O	T	A	L	O	W	E	R
A	G	U	E	S	P	E	T	A	N	O	L	E
N	E	E	D	T	I	R	E	B	E	L	L	E

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BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON



MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL



HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER



LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO



TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING



Mayoya's art blooms in May

(From page D8)

lure of color proved irresistible. Though his first works were more illustrative in rendering, as shown in his two past exhibits, Mayoya has finally found his metier by celebrating the richness of still-life tradition in flower painting.

The flowers have, of course, been chosen for their beauty and rarity—birds

of paradise, anthuriums, *gumamelas*, pig-tails and lilas—and have been prominently enshrined in an array of basket containers that betray the ethnic and folk-art character of their makers. Around them are assorted accent pieces or props, like the woven Baguio tapestry that enhances the rendition of a blossom, or found driftwood that contrasts sharply with the variegated hues of his subjects.

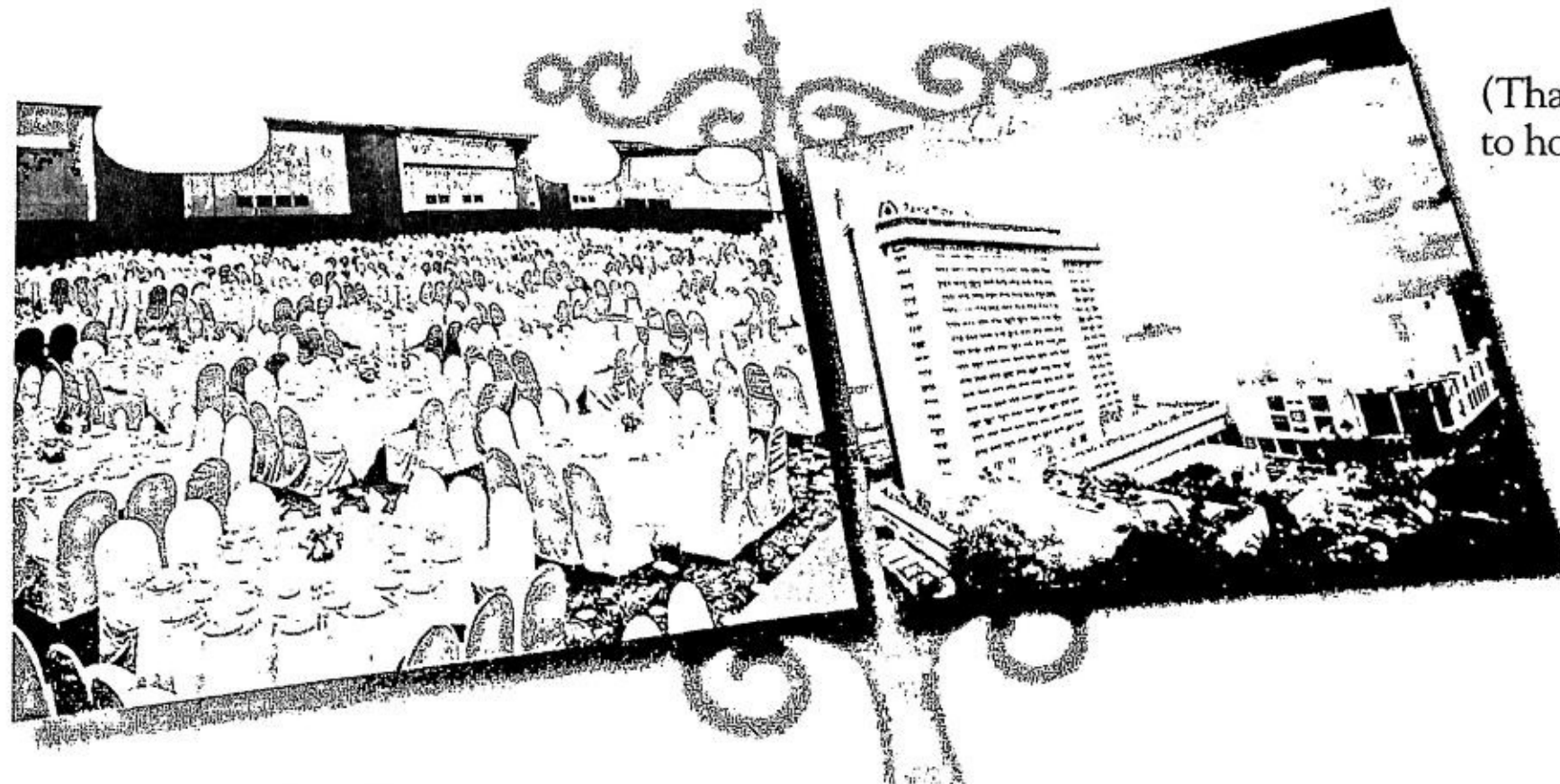
Mayoya has drawn on the conventions of floral still-life painting to strike out on his own. In "Anthurium," for instance, he proffers a close-up of these tropical blossoms, recording the textural qualities and formal peculiarities that distinguish the species of blossom from another. Here, the point is not really on the species of the flower, notwithstanding the size of the blossoms,

MAYOYA'S/ p.D7



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THE MORE YOU SHOP! THE MORE CHANCES TO WIN P25,000.00 WORTH OF GIFT CERTIFICATES WEEKLY!

1. Present to the Promo Counter single or accumulated receipt/s within the weekly scheduled period (cash/credit) worth P500.00 in the Department Store and/or Supermarket for you to get one LIBO-LIBO LINGGO-LINGGO Raffle coupon
2. Fill-up the raffle coupon with complete name, address, telephone number and affix signature to validate your entry for the weekly and quarterly draws
3. Drop your raffle entry and/or entries at any of the designated drop boxes for each week within Masagana Superstore Taft Ave.-Kalaw, Manila and Masagana Citimall Taft Ave.-Libertad Pasay
4. Deadline for submission of entries is at 12:00 noon of every scheduled weekly draw
5. Weekly raffle entries from both branches will be combined in one tambyolo every weekly draw with the presence of a DTI Representative
6. Weekly draws will be alternately conducted every Friday, 3:00 P.M., at Masagana Superstore Taft Ave., Kalaw, Manila and Masagana Citimall Taft Ave.-Libertad Pasay with the presence of a DTI Representative
7. Aside from weekly draws, there will be also four (4) separate quarterly draws, which will be held at Masagana Superstore Taft Ave.-Kalaw, Manila, at 3:00 P.M. immediately following the last weekly draw of the quarter
8. a) For each quarterly draw, all non-winning weekly entries covered by each quarter will be removed from the tambyolo, combined in one box sealed, signed by the DTI Representative, and kept under the custody of the Marketing Department of Masagana Superstore for safekeeping, and will be opened up and drawn with the presence of a DTI Representative during the scheduled quarterly draw. b) All non-winning entries of each quarterly draws will not be qualified to join the succeeding weekly and quarterly draws
9. Prizes at stake:
 - For the weekly draws:
 - Major Prize: one (1) weekly winner of P25,000.00 worth of Gift Certificate
 - Consolation Prize: twenty-five (25) weekly winners of P500.00 worth of Gift Certificate each
 - For the Quarterly Draws:
 - Major Prize: one (1) quarterly winner of P25,000.00 Cash
 - Consolation Prize: twenty-five (25) quarterly winners of P2,500.00 worth of Gift Certificate each
10. A participant may only win one prize per draw. The prize with a higher value will be awarded to the winner. Another coupon will be drawn for the smaller prize
11. Winners will be notified by registered mail with instructions on how they may claim their prizes, and will be announced through newspapers
12. Winners may personally claim their prize at Masagana Superstore, 5th floor TRIDA Bldg., Taft Ave. corner T.M. Kalaw, Ermita, Manila
13. Prizes not claimed within sixty (60) days from the date of notification receipt will be forfeited with prior approval of the DTI
14. Gift certificates are transferable but not convertible to cash. All prizes are tax paid
15. Employees of Masagana Superstore, its suppliers, advertising agency and their relatives up to second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified to join the promotion
16. Participating Branches: Masagana Superstore Taft Ave.-Kalaw and Masagana Citimall Taft Ave.-Libertad Pasay
17. Promo Period is from May 28, 2001 up to May 31, 2002.

SEE LEAFLETS FOR COMPLETE DETAILS

- MECHANICS: There are three (3) ways to avail of these "ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR ITEMS".
- I. You can have them for FREE!
 - 1. Aside from raffle coupon, you can also avail of the "ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR" by presenting separate accumulated purchase receipt from Department Store or Supermarket. (Please refer to the LIBO-LIBO LINGGO-LINGGO Raffle Promo Week Schedule)
 - 2. Specified minimum amount of purchase for each item must be attained to get the "ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR" for FREE. The higher the purchase amount, the bigger the item value
 - 3. Validated purchase receipt shall be stamped "CLAIMED"
 - 4. Purchase receipts can only be used once in availing of the "ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR"
 - II. You can have them at an EXTRA LOWER PRICE!
 - 1. Aside from raffle coupon, you can also avail of the "ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR" by presenting separate accumulated purchase receipt from Department Store or Supermarket. (Please refer to the LIBO-LIBO LINGGO-LINGGO Raffle Promo Week Schedule)
 - 2. Minimum purchase requirement is worth P100.00. Please see Schedule of Purchases which will be posted at the PROMO BOOTH.
 - 3. The Promo Personnel will validate the purchase receipts presented. Upon validation, the Promo Personnel will determine the additional amount to be paid based on the Schedule of Purchases
 - 4. The Promo Personnel will issue a PAYING TAG stating the amount to be paid.

SEE LEAFLETS FOR COMPLETE DETAILS

5. Proceed to the designated counters and pay the amount stated on the Paying Tag
 6. Get the receipt and present it to the PROMO BOOTH. The Promo Personnel will validate the now receipt and staple it with the first receipt/s presented
 7. Validated purchase receipts shall be stamped "CLAIMED"
 8. Purchase receipts can only be used once in availing of the "ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR".
- III. You can BUY them!
1. Proceed to the PROMO BOOTH, choose among the "ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR", and ask for the assistance of the Promo Personnel
 2. The Promo Personnel will issue a PAYING TAG stating the amount to be paid
 3. Proceed to the designated counters, and pay the amount stated on the paying tag
 4. Get the receipt and present it to the Promo Personnel for validation
 5. Validated purchase receipt shall be stamped "CLAIMED"
- IV. PROMO PERIOD: May 28, 2001 to May 31, 2002



Per DTI-NCR PERMIT NO. AI-0284, Series of 2001

TAFT COR. T. M. KALAW MANILA MASAGANA CITIMALL, PASAY

Mayoya's

(From page D5)

but rather the formal and visual relationships between color areas.

In "Ibong Paraiso," Mayoya shows the stark frontality of the cluster of flowers and leaves, evoking in the process their sturdy figuration, set against the dark-blue background contrasting with the natural earth-colored *bayong*.

In "Pigtail," Mayoya presents a curious mélange of freshly picked pigtail blossoms set in a basket seemingly haloed by a delicately crumpled table runner of ethnic design. Each of the fuchsia-hued petals is distinctly delineated in contrast to their robust green leaves that seem to frame these blossoms.

In a more arresting piece, "Pinitas ni Ate," a bunch of magnolia blossoms lies in a basket, with the daintily printed cloth underneath, while a piece of driftwood in the background, its bark coarsely peeling off, a study in sheer dramatic contrast.

Mayoya's pontilist style, while no doubt painstaking in its execution, has made us fully aware of the interplay of images in his compositions as he transforms textures and colors into something more intense than what is possible in nature. By incorporating objects or props drawn from everyday life, Mayoya has enriched form and made it expressive. Though the effect may just be a bit contrived in its depiction, the resulting images are nonetheless a clear expression of Mayoya's passion for still life, and more particularly for the poetry of nature that is at the heart and soul of his life-affirming art.

*Wala
nang
sasarap
pa sa
habang
buhay na
pagsasama.*

Congratulations to *Aga & Charlene*



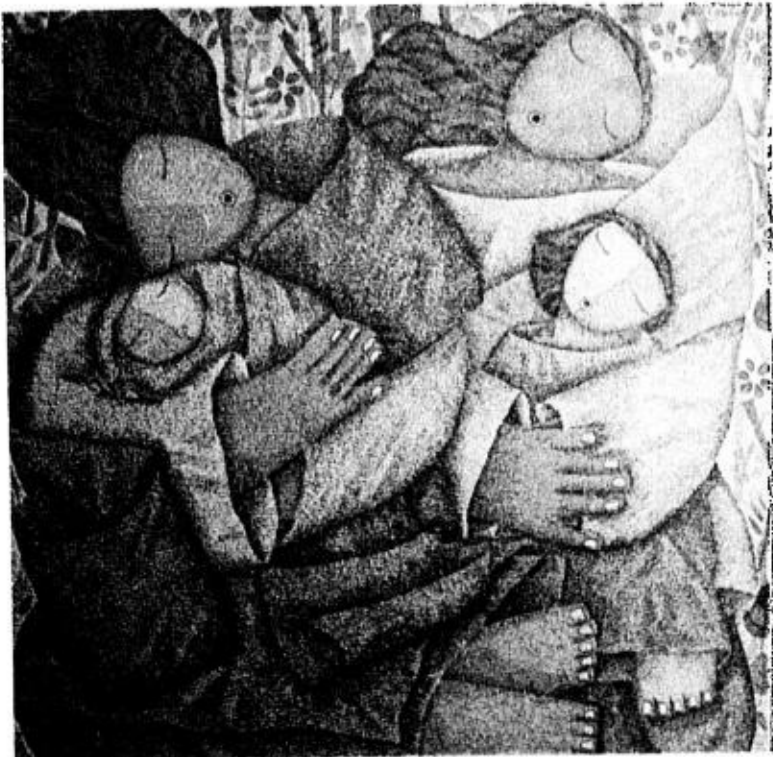
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"SUNSET Stories," acrylic

Jack Salud's 'Sunset Stories' at Gallery 139

"SUNSET Stories," Jack Salud's eighth solo show of acrylics, is being mounted until June 5 at Gallery 139, SM Megamall A. The "stories" range from the root of the title to the artist's success story.

Inspired by a childhood memory of listening to his grandmother tell tales of provincial life, Salud interprets the mood of togetherness and security in portraits of a close-knit clan or people engaged in music, gardening and other stress-free activities.

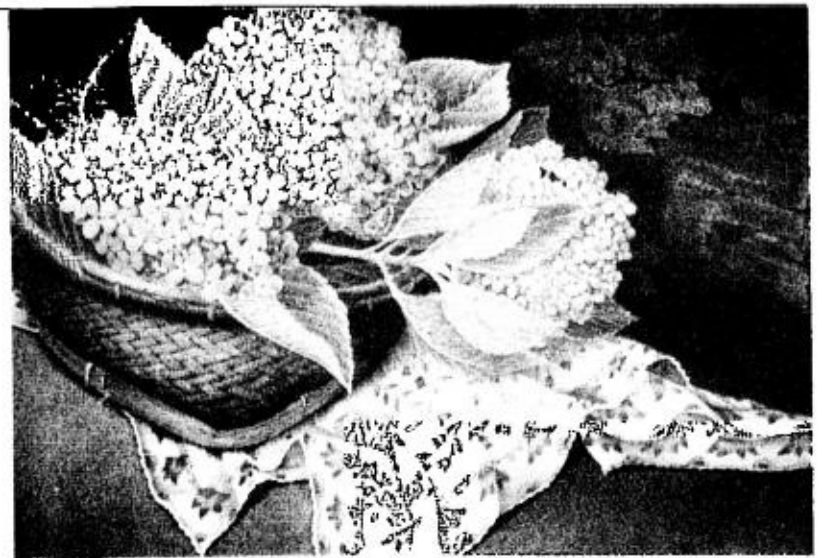
Meanwhile, the story on Salud's signature pointillist style is that he has become more at ease with his tireless technique; the warm hues, graceful lines and impressive dimension of his eight naive paint-

ings are proof.

"I think my method is more polished now," he assesses. "Now I know what I want and I'm already able to say that I'll stick to this kind. The struggle is still always what to paint. How to paint is already easy."

As for Salud's own "sunset story," shifting values have made this artist less pressured to come up with more paintings than he should, and more inclined to spend the evening with his wife and young daughter. "Parenting is very important to me," says Salud. "More than anything, it's the greatest priority of my life."

Visit Gallery 139 at 4/L SM Megamall A, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. daily.



"PINITAS ni Ate"

Mayoya's art blooms in May

BY GINO DORMIENDO

A FULL-TIME gardener by profession and a part-time painter by inclination, Felipe Mayoya captures the subject of tropical flora in all its iridescent glory in his recently concluded solo exhibit at the Metropolitan Gallery in SM Megamall. Principally a self-taught artist who has worked under the wings of Araceli "Cheloy" Dans, his employer and mentor, the 50-year-old Mayoya uses watercolor as medium, opting to work in the pointillist manner to convey the nuances of his floral still-life paintings.

Mayoya clearly knows his subject inside out, having tended the gardens of the Dans' Baguio summer residence for the last 20 years. Literally a flower child who has been fascinated with plants and flowers as far back as he can remember, he first dabbled in drawing, using pencil and charcoal as medium, and switching later to watercolor when the

MAYOYA'S/ p.D5

Congratulations Aga and Charlene.



"PIGTAIL"



"LILA"



"IBONG Paraiso"

The miracles of Our Lady of Manaoag

THE MOST amazing thing was related to me by artist-framer Johnny Soriano during the opening of Pancho Plano's exhibit at the Ayala Museum last May 18. I never knew that Johnny was deeply devoted to Our Lady of Manaoag.

When he went home one time in the early '80s to their barrio in Masical, Amulung in Cagayan Valley, he joined the procession of Our Lady of Manaoag who was the patroness of their barrio.

The image was donated by an old lady from Ilocos Norte. The *carroza* had no battery, so it could not light up. But the amazing thing was the *carroza* was lighted throughout the procession. To this day, Johnny cannot explain it.

Foreigner cured of cancer

A CERTAIN Mr. Fisher from Bangkok, Thailand came to the Philippines when his company assigned him here. He met and married a Filipina and had children with her. In the '80s, his company suffered bankruptcy and he lost his job. He learned about Our Lady of Manaoag and drove up to visit her. He prayed to her for help and that she might intercede for him to have a son as his wife was pregnant at that time. His prayers were answered.

In 1991, he and his family went back to Bangkok. He constantly prayed to Our Lady of Manaoag when he was struck by cancer. His prayer was answered. He is now healed. The picture of our Lady, which he bought way back in the '80s, is still enshrined in the family altar.

Our Lady of Manaoag in Cebu

Fr. Rey Talaugon must be very blessed because his parish in Moalboal, Cebu province recently received the image of Our Lady of Manaoag. The good priest had always wanted to visit her shrine in Pangasinan, but he was never able to do so because he could not afford the cost of the pilgrimage.

Now, he does not only have the image donated by Al Arriesgado, but he was able to travel to Manaoag on May 2 for the Diamond Jubilee of the Canonical Coronation of Our Lady. His trip was

PURELY PERSONAL

Josephine Darang



sponsored and he was able to concelebrate during the Mass, together with 50 other priests, seven bishops and two archbishops.

The San Juan Nepomuceno Parish is nestled in a coastal town, 90 km south of Cebu City. On enthronement day on May 6 at 11 a.m., the church was overflowing with people. Fr. Patricio Apa was there from Manaoag. The Our Lady of Manaoag Choir of Mandaue sang during the Mass. The altar was decorated with white flowers. Father Rey's heart must have been full to overflowing.

Pilgrim image of Manaoag

The pilgrim image of Our Lady of Manaoag is in Manila. Churches that want to be visited by the Virgin can call Jovita Sy at 687-2546/48.

Nuestra Señora de Guia marks feast

MAY 19 is the fiesta of Ermita when the people celebrate the feast of Nuestra Señora de Guia, the oldest Marian image in the Philippines. May 19, 1971 was the day when a Spanish soldier found the image being venerated by natives on the spot where the church now stands.

This year's celebration headed by Msgr. Jerome Reyes seemed very special. The vestment of the Virgin had been changed to white and blue with touches of silver. It was designed by Bert Mondragon. Her beautiful face now stands out and can be seen clearly by devotees who look up to her when they pray.

The *hermana mayor* this year is Babes Encarnacion with her daughter Wilen Jo Encarnacion as the *capitana*. The church was full and many people



FR. Rey Talaugon (right) during the enthronement of Our Lady of Manaoag

joined the procession afterward. It was led by Tony Adriano, parish council president.

The streets of Ermita were lit up by the passing procession. People in the streets watched and prayed when the Virgin passed by. Like of old, people come to pray to the Virgin for safe voyage or for help in the procurement of visas to other places.

As her title implies, Our Lady of Guidance is also like Our Lady of Antipolo who is Nuestra Señora de la Paz y Buen Viaje. It was to Nuestra Señora de Guia to whom I prayed for a US visa in May 1992. I promised that I would walk in her procession if she answered my petition. I got a 10-year visa.

Sta. Rita de Cascia procession

I WALKED with Oskar Peralta and a new friend, Brenda Henson-Vicente, after the Mass honoring Sta. Rita de Cascia last May 22. There were more people this time during the Mass and procession.

When the saint was brought back to the church,



OUR Lady of Manaoag

people waited for the blessing of red roses. I was standing there looking up to the saint when someone handed me a rose. Ester Rivera just gave me the sign I needed for an answered prayer. More people gave me roses afterward and the arrangement is now on the dining table where I am typing this column.

Sto. Niño de Providencia celebration

TO MARK the transfer of the image of St. Niño de Providencia on June 16, 1992 from the house of Cora Gonzales to the chapel near it, the devotees of Sto. Niño will celebrate with Lorna Gonzales, caretaker of the chapel, with special prayers and sharing of food.

It will also be the birthday of Dr. Rodolfo "Boy" Gonzales, brother of Lorna, who was the victim of an inhuman and crazy stranger on the night of April 4, 1982.

Boy, who was serving as an intern at the Jose Reyes Memorial Hospital at that time, was asked by a fellow doctor to drive her home using her car. Her house was near the Labor Hospital. On his way home, someone struck the doctor in the head with a heavy metal instrument. Boy was in a coma for three months.

At the outset, he was a goner, but the prayers of his mother, Corazon, and many people revived him. Through patient healing and ministrations, Boy is alive today. Although he is aware of his surroundings, he cannot talk.

There must be a reason this happened to him—a tall, good-looking and dedicated surgeon. Where his clinic was to be is now the chapel of the Sto. Niño de Providencia.

It is ironic that the chapel has been the repository of prayers for healing, while Boy himself is waiting for a miracle. Carmelites in Bacolod told Lorna that her brother is the "saving soul" of the sick who go to the chapel.

Nothing is impossible with God. Let us pray that Boy will be normal again. His doctor now is Ofelia Adapon.

Seminarian needs help

SEMINARIAN Rommel Arce is a second-year student at the Nazareno de Jesus Seminary in Borogan, Eastern Samar. He needs help to be able to continue his studies for the priesthood. Please write him at the above address, if you want to help.

St. Gabriel, not St. Michael

ERRATUM: In a previous column, I wrote about the encounter of a Filipino visionary with St. Gabriel, but the title inadvertently mentioned St. Michael the Archangel as the one who appeared to her.

Children want to go to school

TWO high school students in Culion, Palawan want to continue with their studies, but their mother who is a laundrywoman cannot afford to pay the tuition fees for both.

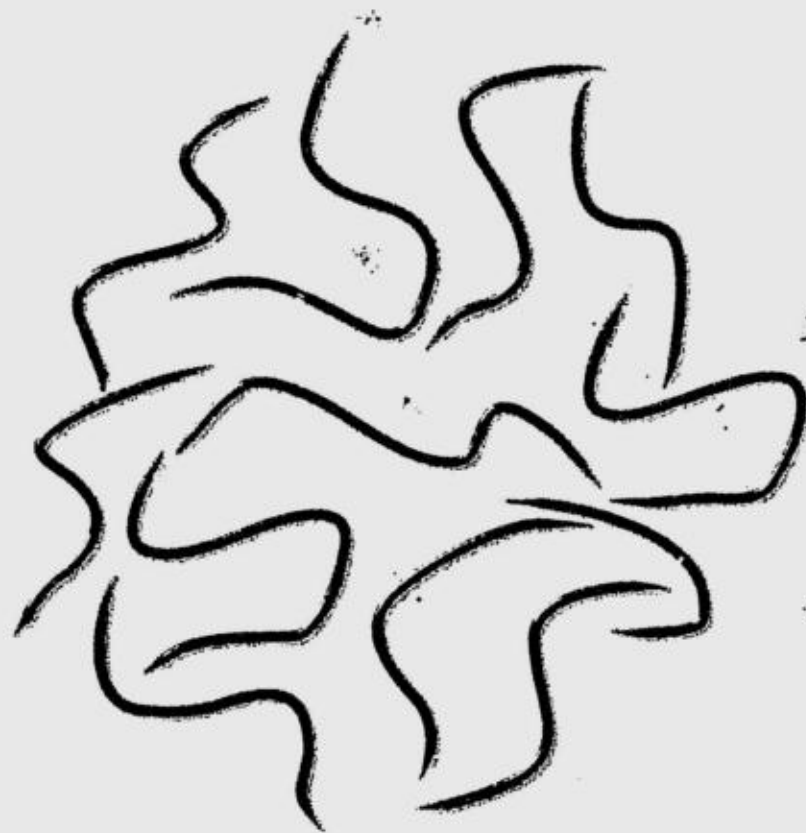
A salutatorian high school graduate wants to go to college. He has passed his entrance exams in UP Diliman. Those who want to help can beep me at 141-020543.

FEU reopens College of Engineering

FAR Eastern University will reopen its College of Engineering beginning school year 2001-2002 this June in answer to the demand of the commercial and industrial sectors for graduates solidly grounded in their particular disciplines.

To be offered are Bachelor of Science degrees in Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Electronics and Communications Engineering and Industrial Engineering with an initial enrollment of 500-600 students.

According to FEU president Dr. Edilberto C. de Jesus, the university hopes to contribute to the expansion of the supply of engineers to help support the country's industrial and economic growth. Planning to partner with the private sector, the college will link up with local companies to give students practical experience in order to complement classroom instruction. One of the steps toward expansion will be the opening of a Graduate School of Engineering that offers master's degree and doctorate programs. Other undergraduate majors may also be offered.



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A fresh look at the Mindanao riddle

Mindanao, Statecraft and Ecology—Moros, Lumads and Settlers Across the Lowland-Highland Continuum

By Eric S. Casino
Notre Dame University, Cotabato

By JEREMY C. MALCAMPO

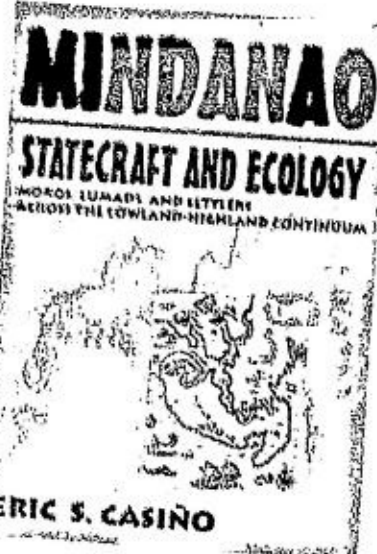
"MINDANAO, Statecraft and Ecology—Moros, Lumads and Settlers Across the Lowland-Highland Continuum" by Eric S. Casino waylays most of what history books have taught us about Southern Philippines. Published by the Notre Dame University in Cotabato, this work of-

REVIEW

fers a series of pioneering reinterpretations of ethnohistorical events and ethnographic patterns in the Cotabato-Sarangani region—the scene of sporadic bloody fighting between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Philippine government forces.

The book explores heretofore unsuspected connections among such seemingly disparate historical events as Moro slave-raiding, the influx of land-hungry settlers, the highland territoriality and marginalization of Lumads, and Moro autonomy movements. Slave-raiding need not be construed exclusively as religious wars between Christians and Muslims, as formerly argued by such historians as the Jesuit Horacio de la Costa and the social anthropologist Cesar Majul. More recent scholars such as Warren and Laarhoven have shown new evidence that the capture and accumulation of slave manpower from the Visayas and other parts of the Malay world were economic and political enterprises motivated by pre-modern state formation in the Southern Philippines.

Slavery was partly a function of statecraft. When slaves are viewed as one form of "strategic resources" harnessed for state-formation, one can



trace connections between the importance of slave manpower and the importance of agricultural lands, timber, and minerals in Mindanao—all strategic embodiments of power and wealth. Such shifting forms of strategic resources define the competition among political and economic groups motivated by state ideologies.

The statecraft perspective discussed in this book makes the emergence of revolutionary groups such as the MNLF and MILF much more understandable. Another unsuspected historical connection is between Moro slave-raiding and the highland ecology of the Lumads. Presented here is a novel, region-wide rather than a single-tribe perspective, based on lowland-highland ethnic distribution continuum.

This perspective, originally suggested by the socio-ecological theories of Colin Loarca and Forrest-Sauley, enables us to see Lumad highland territoriality as resulting from a "differential acculturation" response in the face of Moro and Christian colonization of the lowlands.

Treasure trove of curio and memorabilia

Cabinet of Wonders and Other Laguna Stories
By Annie Feleo and David Shenik
Anvil Publishing, 2001

By NITA UMALI BERTHELSEN

LAGUNA is a mere heartbeat from Quezon.

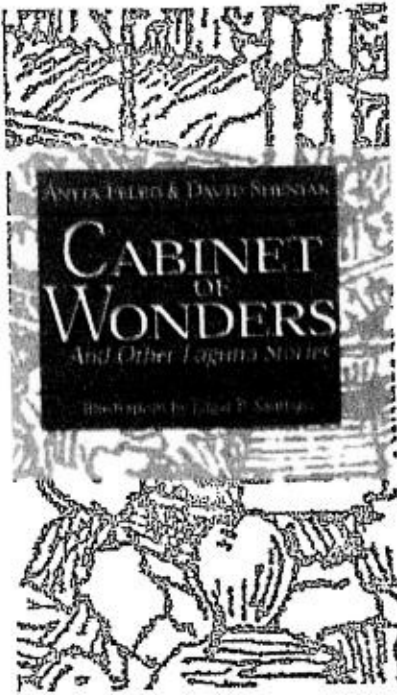
For this reader of "Cabinet," the great thing about it is that it may well be crafted in my town in Quezon. Although Tayabenses identify more closely with the Batangueño's genetic impulses, the physical proximity of Laguna places them all in one geographical and cultural bowl.

We share the identical mountain

ranges with their fanciful myths, the river of the town of San Pablo flows into the waterways of Tiaong. Sampaloc Lake is "sister" to Ticob Lake (it is said that a sunken banca in Ticob eventually surfaced in Sampaloc, passing through an underwater tunnel.)

Writing of people and places in Laguna, Feleo and Shenik discover and describe the pulse beat of an entire region. The woodcarvers of Paete are recalled by once young people of Lucena who, during World War II, danced and ran with feet shod in intricately carved Paete wooden shoes. Pila's processions are retained in the memory of many a Quezon or Batangas lass for the time she guested in Laguna as Reina Elena or Reina de las Flores, a fair exchange to Pila beauties gracing the Mayday celebrations of neighboring provinces.

Today, a telling preserver of provincial culture is the memory of the *provinciano* in Manila, who never gives up his origins, nor his accent, especially as he sings paeans to the good old days. Take Joe Guevara, for instance. His stories on Tanauan are most vivid and colorful, especially in company of his *kabayans*, which at one time included Manoling Collantes, Nap Gareia, Doroy Valencia and mestizo Batangueño Caring Nuguid. The Batangas cabinets they opened were unending revelations of secrets, curio



and memorabilia feeding their loyal attachment to their native home.

Reading through the pages of "Cabinet" one recalls the treasures of a hundred other towns. Laguna becomes a reminder to the *provinciano* residing in Manila, and journeying to the province, that there is more than the income from the latest harvest to fetch. Feleo and Shenik have produced not just a Baedeker of the province of Laguna, as the characters, events and song are replicated in all the regions of the Philippines.

As they traveled in the land of the *buko* pie and waterfalls, they merge their interpretations of the wondrous place; Dave's eyes discover the different and strange, Annie recognizes the familiar.

Dave, who takes on the cabinet writes "in the early days in Europe, someone with something amazing to show—perhaps Grendel's fangs stained with Beowulf's blood?—put the object in a box. On market days, he brought the box to town and opened its lid to whoever was willing to pay the price for a peek. Boxes of this kind were called 'wonder cabinets'; they were the

first museums. To us Laguna is a stack of wonder cabinets... You'll witness Good Friday ritual in Pakil unlike any other in the Philippines, and experience a procession in Los Baños led by a man in woman's clothing. In Pangil you will discover a pregnant Virgin Mary and her yet unborn Child..."

And Annie, long acquainted with Makiling, takes a second look, and then another. "With this protean peak you see what you think you see. On a geo-survey map Mount Makiling is a three-peaked mountain. The center peak is the highest peak, to the left of it is the next highest and the one to the right, the lowest. Put the map away and everything changes. Mount Makiling becomes a funhouse of mirrors. Viewed from the left, the right peak, actually the lowest elevation, seems to lean, making it appear higher. The same optical illusion occurs between

the center peak and the one to the left. Seen from the center peak, the highest elevation, the left peak suddenly appears higher..." the writer goes on. She may have been describing a woman, as she does eventually getting on to the nymph Maria.

"Cabinet" makes fascinating reading, coming as it does from two spirited writers swathed in affection for the land they have chosen as their new home, and settling as they do from the perspective of one-time New Yorkers, who have exchanged their view of the Hudson for the mountains and lakes of Laguna.

Besotted with nostalgia as I put down the book, I recommend it unabashedly, especially to fellow *provincianos*. They, I am certain, will say, "In my town, we have even more wondrous cabinets."



"VISIONS of the Possible (Legacies of Philippine Freedom)" celebrates Filipinos' quest for freedom, and "In Excelsis" features never-before-published photos of Jose Rizal, the national hero and Asia's Renaissance man. They received the National Book Award for Best Book Design in 1998 and 1996, respectively, and will be part of the exhibit, "Best of Filipino Books," sponsored by the Exporters Association of the Philippines, in five cities in the US and Canada. Both are published by Jose and Mardy Y. Oroso of Studio 5 Designs Inc. and available at National Bookstore.

Edsa II book launched today

ANVIL Publishing and AsixPix with the Edsa Shrine will launch "Edsa 2: A Nation in Revolt," 6 p.m. today at the Edsa Shrine. "Edsa 2" is a photographic account of the events that led to People Power II. It contains 267 moving and memorable images by 46 Filipino photojournalists, four of whom are part of the book's editorial board. An essays by investigative reporter Sheila Coronel titled "The Unmaking of a President" provides a running commentary of the events that led up to this important

act of collective indignation against a president who took advantage to his popularity to rob the country blind.

The photos include the rallies in Makati, Mendiola and in other cities in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The book, the first of its kind to be released, is being pre-sold at National Bookstore for P995 for the soft-cover edition. Copies of the hardcover edition will be available today at the launch at a special price. Call Anvil Publishing at 671-9235/1899.



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Feeling Francophile and youthful with 'French Spring in Manila'

BY ALEX Y. VERGARA

IN KEEPING with the season, the French embassy in the Philippines, together with Alliance Française de Manille and Association Française D'Action Artistique, launches this year's "French Spring in Manila" (May 29-June 30) with an apt theme: "A Celebration of Youth."

Now on its third edition, the annual affair has become a venue for some of the best French artists to display their talents in various fields. It also affords countless Filipinos the chance to experience for themselves French culture at its best without spending a fortune going to Paris.

Past performers include legendary pantomime Marcel Marceau (who doesn't know him?), trumpeter Alain Brunet, Cirque de Baroque and avant-garde dancers doing numbers choreographed by Marie Claude Pietragalla. The annual French Film Festival alone has reportedly attracted close to 18,000 local film buffs last year. Indeed, a great deal of popcorn changed hands in between those subtitles.

Orchestre de Contrebasses, a group of six male musicians, performs a 30-minute show tonight for media persons and selected guests at the Mandarin Oriental's Captain's Bar. Their repertoire will probably be as diverse as their musical genres: soul, jazz, Latino and pop.

The same group will provide entertainment tomorrow night also at the Captain's Bar at a gala dinner hosted by Ambassador Gilles Chouraqui. Guests from the government, business and the French communities are expected to attend.

"This year's celebration is mostly geared for the young and by the young," says Filipino Martin Macalintal, PR officer of the French embassy's cultural affairs. "We will feature mostly young artists—from dancers, painters, musicians, choreographers to movie directors."

Incidentally, Chouraqui first thought of this event as consul general in Hong Kong. Aside from the French government, various French and local companies have been lending financial support through the years to make the event possible. Chouraqui brought the tradition with him soon after being assigned ambassador to the Philippines.

Unique chemistry

A number of talents will also share the stage with their Filipino counterparts. Alain Brunet, who once performed with Ugoy-ugoy, will jam this time with Buhay, a jazz group composed of Mar Dizon, Meong Pacana, Elmer Saison and Tots Tolentino. Performances will be at the Captain's Bar (May 30), Monk's Dream (June 1) and Freedom Bar (June 3).

"It will be interesting to see the unique chemistry between Alain and members of Buhay," says Macalintal. They will be performing the music of such French icons as Charles Trenet and Serge Gainsbourg, among others.

Those with an ear for classical and church



ALAIN Brunet



ORCHESTRE de Contrebasses

music should find Les Trompettes de Versailles interesting. Trumpeters Serge Rougerez, Patrick Marmande and organist-composer Georges Bessonnet specialize in 17th-century French Baroque music which actually originated in Italy.

Through its music, the trio promises to bring back its audience to the grand halls of Versailles with renditions of masterpieces from such French composers Lully, Couperin, Clerambault, Mouret, Corette and Delalande. Okay, you don't know any of these guys from Pierre, er, Adam. Then listen to their music and get to know them better.

The one-night show, June 7, 7:30 p.m., at the San Agustin Church, is made more interesting since Bessonnet will be using the newly restored 18th-century Spanish Baroque pipe organ, hailed as a Filipino cultural treasure distinct from the famed Bamboo Organ of Las Piñas.

Young and multiawarded pianist Jerome Ducros, 27, and cellist Gauthier Capuçon, 19, topbill the French Spring's chamber music offering. The duo will whip up an enchanting evening of sonatas by Debussy, Brahms, Schumann and Rachmaninov on June 18 at RCBC Plaza's Carlos P. Romulo Theater.

Like Brunet, violinist Frederic Pelassy, 27, will return to Manila with a series of performances at the Carlos P. Romulo Theater (June 20) and the St. Cecilia's Music Hall (June 21). Pelassy will perform, among others, Beethoven's Sonata No. 1, the Rondo capriccioso of Saint-



A SCENE from "Taxi"

Saëns, Brahms' Sonata No. 3 and Ravel's Tzigane. Luci Magalit, an equally young Filipino talent, will join him.

Visual arts and film

If you go for the visual arts, respected French art critic Philippe Piguet has assembled the works of six of the most promising figurative painters in France today. Their paintings will be on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila from May 31 to June 30.

Painter Jerome François, whose works will be among those on exhibit, will meet with selected Filipino artists, journalists and students to discuss contemporary forms of visual art on May 31 also at the Met.



GAUTHIER Capuçon



JÉRÔME Ducros

The French embassy has it all covered with performances by fifth-year students of the Ballet Academy of Paris at the Cultural Center of the Philippines on June 6.

Now, down with those eyebrows, ladies and gents. Some of these budding dancers, ranging from 17-20 years old, may lack experience, but they're not total tyros onstage, having already performed in various parts of France, Europe and Asia.

But the French Film Festival, from June 8-18 at the Shangri-La Plaza, is still by far the most-awaited event of every year. More so since the year's batch—from "Salsa," "Indochine," "Taxi" to "Place Vendôme"—are relatively new and geared for the young.

Macalintal should know since he was one of those involved in choosing the films while in Paris. "Most of these films will really appeal to the youth," he says. "And we have a good mix this year."

Let's just hope people at the newly "sanitized" MTRCB share their enthusiasm. None of the films have been approved for showing as of last week. Worse, organizers of the nonprofit film event reportedly have to pay the board screening fees usually levied on commercial film producers.

"French Spring in Manila" culminates with a "Fête de la Musique," an all-night street party in Malate on June 23. You don't need to know how to speak French since local bands will be providing the music. But young or old, spring or no spring, a spirit of rebirth and growth will most likely fill the air.

Call the Embassy of France at 810-1981 to -87 or e-mail at culturel@france.com.ph

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

Trumpets holds mini-theater festival

BY LUNA GRIÑO-INOCIAN

INTERMITTENT rain showers and back-to-school sales signaling the end of summer. In theater, however, it means wrapping up summer workshop curricula and gearing up to the much-awaited showcase.

In theater parlance, the showcase is the culminating activity, the mini performance held at the end of the two-month stretch of acting, dancing, singing (and whatever else) lessons the child was taking. The showcase is when parents find out what their

children have been up to all this time, whether the money they invested have perceptible "dividends." Do their kids sing, act or dance a little better than they did before they started? Are they more confident, less shy, more articulate? Did they enjoy themselves?

Frenzy

Preparations for these showcases are usually a frenzy of activity. Teachers act as directors, vocal coaches, production managers, costume designers and production crew. Students memorize lines, learn choreography and help make props. Production people scurry around amid all this, trying to bring order into the seeming chaos.

It is a time that is energy-packed, stressed-filled and yet still lots of fun.

For Trumpets Playshop, with 45 classes (which translates into 45 showcases) and 1,200 students, that energy, stress and fun is multiplied accordingly. Thankfully, unlike previous years, all that activity (and frenzy) will not be held in each of the Playshop venue. It would have been a coordinating nightmare. This year, the Trumpets Theater Festival (so called because something as massive and diverse as these showcases cannot be anything but) will be contained in one manageable (and incredibly well-appointed) venue, Onstage Greenbelt.

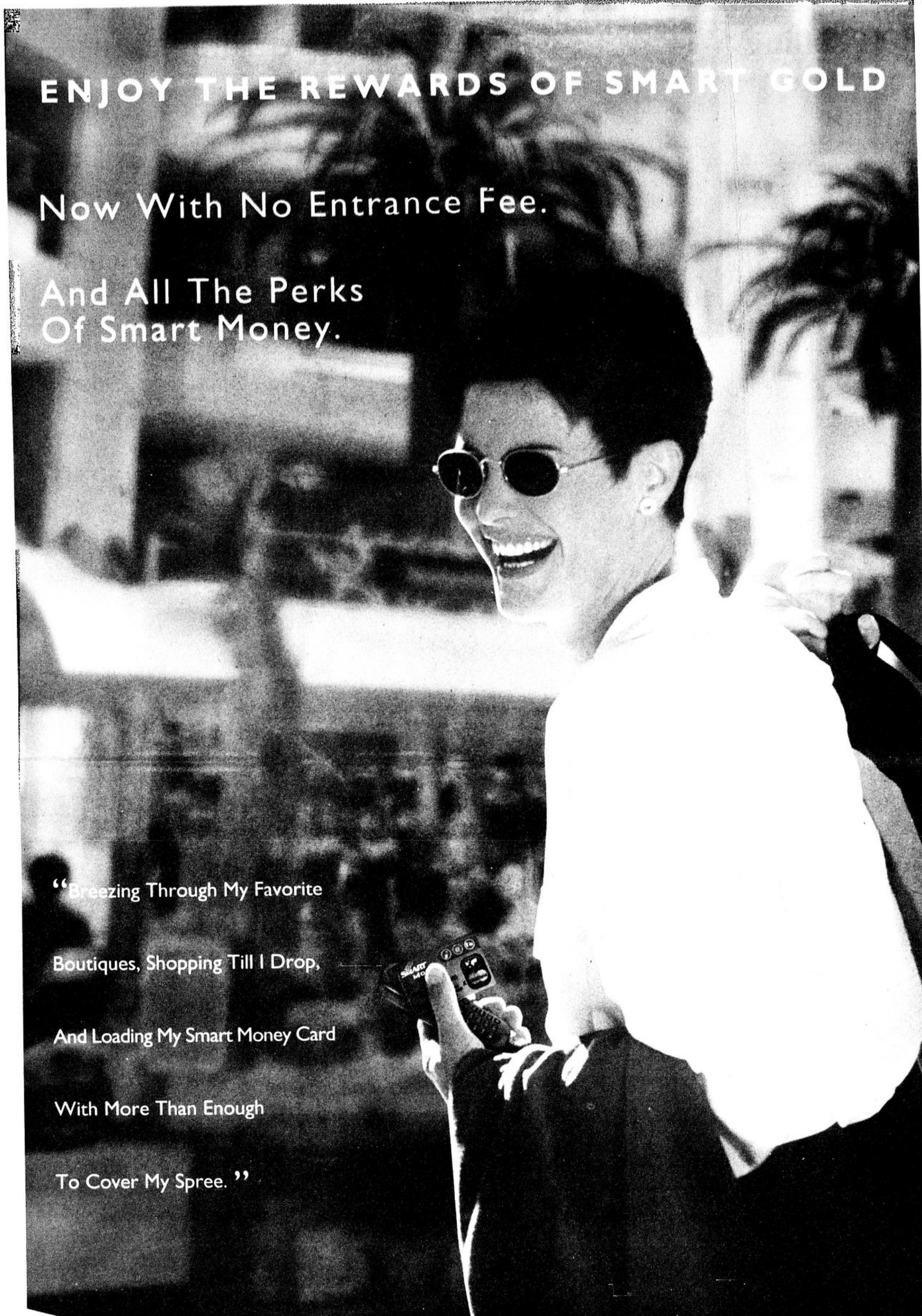
Mini musical

Starting May 28 and running all the way to June 3 at the frequency of six shows per day from 9 a.m.-10 p.m., the Trumpets Theater Festival will feature creatively produced mini musicals ("Godspell," "Whistle Down the Wind," "The Whiz," "Winnie the Pooh" and many more) performed by budding young actors; street dancing showdowns by students who were taught to groove by the Manoeuvres all summer; a full-fledged fashion show by students of Philippine supermodel Tweetie de Leon; a photo exhibit put together by Toch Arellano and his pupils; a concert by the voice classes; a song-and-dance revue featuring theater stalwarts like Audie Gemora (who, this time around, did not teach a class but enrolled in one); and even original work based on literature ("The Snow Queen," "Make 'Em Laugh" and Shel Silverstein's "Where the Sidewalk Ends"). If that isn't variety, I don't know what is.

Fun and frolic, entertainment galore... a real festival for a whole week. And at only P100 a pop, that isn't bad. Kids can watch other kids and perhaps whet their appetites for performance. Proud parents, *lolos* and *lolas*, *kuyas* and *ates* can come to applaud their own little (or not so little) stars. The *barkada* can come heckle their friends (if they don't die of envy first). Casters, agents and producers can come and discover future stars. Everyone can come and have a rip-roaring time. Hey, it's a festival. Great way to end the summer.

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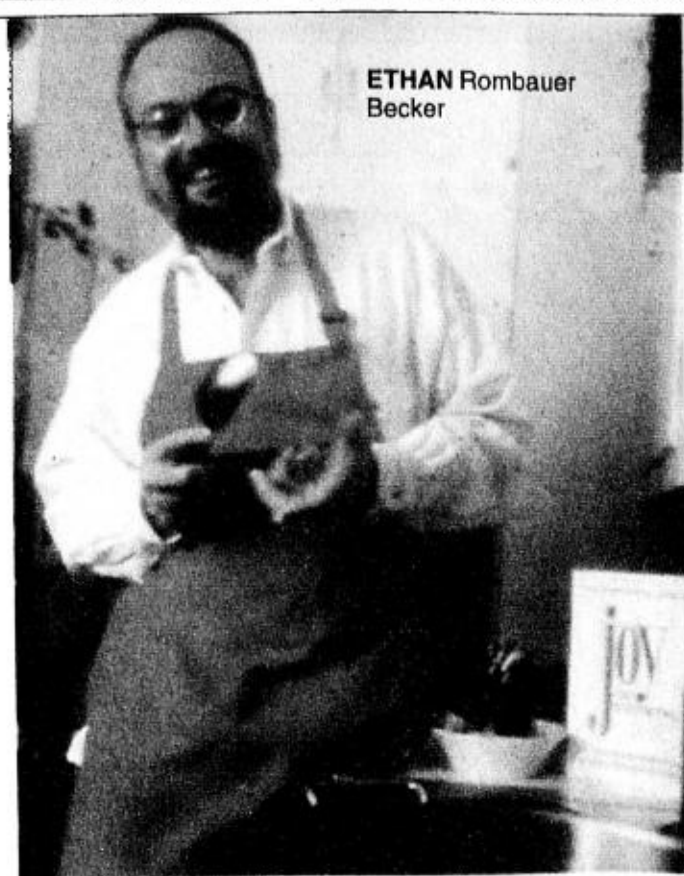
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Best-selling cookbook author

COOKING is a long-standing tradition with National Bookstore's author of the month, Ethan Rombauer Becker. His grandmother, Irma Rombauer, authored "The Joy of Cooking," which has become an indispensable cooking tool to households all over the world. First published in 1931, the book is now on its fifth edition with Becker co-authoring several editions, including the latest one, "The All New All Purpose Joy of Cooking."

"A devoted cook and enthusiastic organic gardener, Becker trained at the prestigious Le Cordon Bleu in Paris. Other books he co-authored include, "All About Pasta and Noodles," "All About Soups and Stews," "All About Vegetarian Cooking" and "All About Chicken."

Find Becker's books at the National Bookstore nearest you.



ETHAN Rombauer Becker

Miffy fosters creativity in children

SHE'S pure as snow, cute and totally adorable. This story is all about her. Her name is Miffy.

Miffy was first created by Dutch artist Dick Bruna in 1955. His own style took inspiration from the French artist Matisse. But Bruna was able to develop his own minimalist style. The characters look directly at viewers with open candor. His illustrations for Miffy have colors that are mixed especially for him, now known as the Bruna colors. These bright and primary colors never fail to attract children's attention. The secret to Bruna's style is in reducing the subject into its essence, making it easily recognizable.

Ever since the first Miffy illustration

was created in the 1950s, Bruna's philosophy about her has never changed. His philosophy is that every Miffy product should foster the creativity of the child and never incite violence. Dick Bruna's target group is children from 0-6 years.

And because of the wholesome appeal of Miffy, she received more than 37,800 birthday cards from no less than 80 countries for her birthday last year. This feat will be included in the next edition of the Guinness Book of World Records. This is just one of the proofs that children and even adults from all over the world are drawn to her simple yet charming style.

Miffy is basically a publishing-

based character. Her books are accompanied by simple storylines that children easily understand. Even the shape of the book is especially designed for little hands to hold. Bruna's books have sold over 80 million copies and are translated into more than 40 languages.

But there's a lot to Miffy than being children's brand. For Miffy transcends time and age, this little bunny thrills even teenagers. Miffy also has its own official website at www.miffy.com.

And the good news is Miffy will be here in the Philippines. So better prepare because no one can resist this white little bunny named Miffy.

Anthology welcomes contributions

SUBMISSIONS are open for an anthology that will showcase stories, poems, artworks and other forms of artistic expression on paper. This will be open only to former members/editors of Malate Literary Folio, De La Salle University's (Manila campus) official

literary folio.

A panel composed of award-winning writers and artists such as Rhandee Garlitos, Mariano Ching, among others, will edit the anthology.

Send all manuscripts with short biography to Ana Ablaza Baluyot at

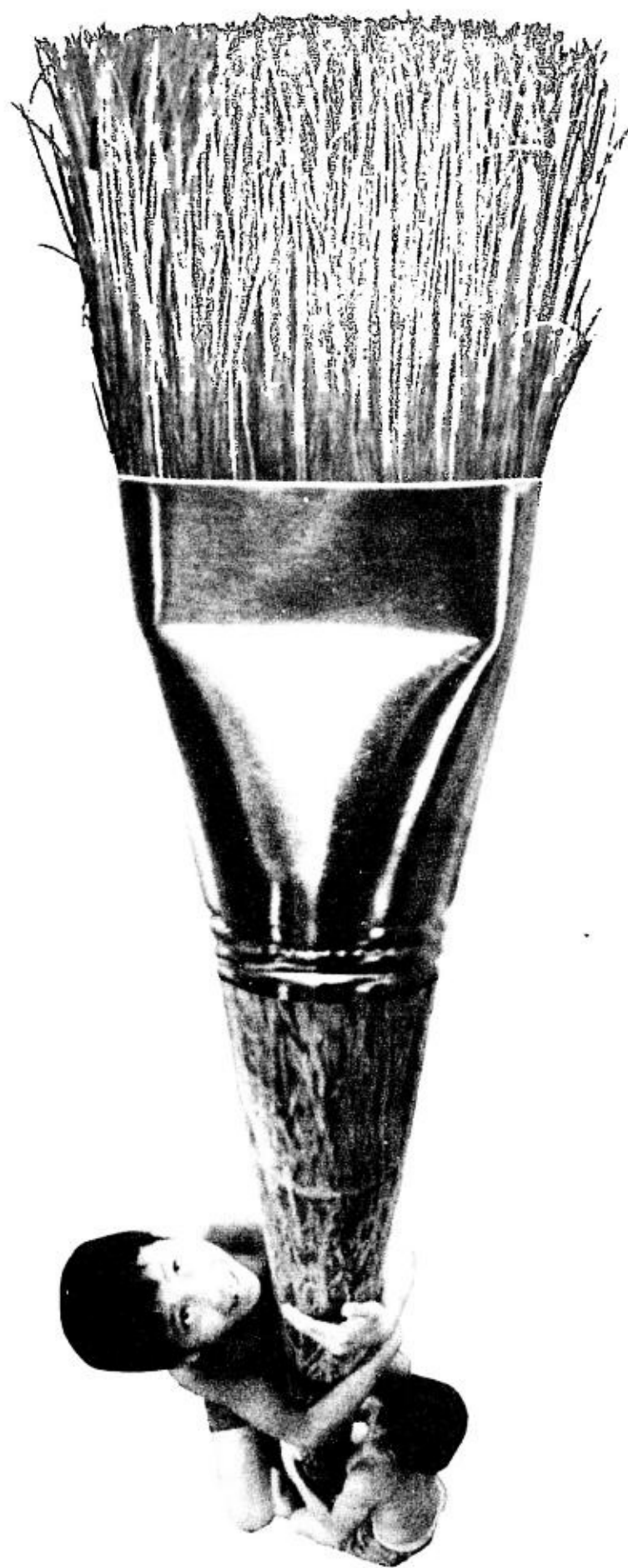
acablaza@hotmail.com in MS Word or Rich Text Format. Artworks and illustrations must be in black and white. There is no theme for this anthology. Deadline of submission is on July 30.

Call Ana at (0917) 367-6877.

ART PETRON 1st National Student Art Competition

The overall theme for this competition is:

Lumang Laro, Bagong Likha



Petron Corporation is proud to announce its first painting competition ever held - **ArtPetron: The 1st National Student Art Competition!** We invite college students from all over the country to submit oil and watercolor artworks depicting children playing Filipino games of yore! In this age of cyber reality, relive a lost era of tumbang preso and patintero days!

Rediscover the joy of flying a saranggola, or winning a game of jolens and trumpo! Allow us to take a peek into the unique culture of your province via special games children play! Better still, discover an unknown Filipino game! Capture it on canvas to be remembered forever! Send us your entries soon! **Sali na!**

Some Filipino indigenous games are the following:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Palo Sebo | Buwan - Buwan |
| Steep - No | (moon - moon) |
| Kandirit | Kambing - Kambing |
| Shato | (goat - goat) |
| Chinese Garter | Dakpansy |
| Saranggola | (Blow in and out of circles) |
| Bugtungan | Ginto - Ginto |
| Arawan | (gold - gold) |
| Juego de Anillo | Habulan |
| (ring in a spring) | (tag chase) |
| Kararang Lata | Kapitang Bakod |
| Lukong Tink | (wood tag) |
| Lukong Baka | Lagundi |
| Lukong Lubid | (head tag) |
| Pacintero | Nadipahan Ka |
| Pitik - Bulag | (touched with outstretched arms) |
| Anino | Ora - Ora Comanching |
| (shadow tag) | (witch's rock tag) |
| Araw - Lilim | Pan - Caon - Caona |
| (sun-shade) | (Bis-chase inside a circle) |
| Aswang - Aswang | Tumbang Preso |
| (witch tag) | (knock the can down) |
| Basket ng Prutas | |
| (basket of fruits) | |

See application forms for more!

A. Rules and Regulations

- The overall theme for this painting competition is "Lumang Laro, Bagong Likha." Entries must feature children playing a Filipino indigenous game and must capture vivid expressions of joy, triumph, determination, and vigor. Portrayal of rarely-featured Filipino games is encouraged. The paintings must point out values such as fairness, healthy competition, team spirit, and cooperation. Since some of the winning works will be included in Petron's 2002 calendar, all entered artworks must not be in abstract form and must be signed by the artist.
- The painting competition is open to all Filipino college students and students of art whether in a university program or a tutorial or museum-based painting class.
 - Application forms are available at all colleges, universities, nearest Petron Service Centers, or at the Project Secretariat Office c/o Studio 5 Designs, 28 Paseo de Roxas corner Jupiter St., Bel-Air Village, 1209, Makati City.
 - The participating student must be of good standing and of good moral character. A letter of recommendation of good moral character from the respective deans or art teacher must be attached to the application form.
 - Application forms must be validated by the respective dean of the college or university or the art teacher of tutorial or museum-based painting class.
- The application forms must be accompanied by a duly-accomplished affidavit as provided.

B. Categories

- This painting competition has two (2) contest categories:

A. Watercolor

- The surface to be used for this category shall be watercolor paper or illustration board.
- The official size for this category shall not be less than 22 x 29 inches, not more than 55 x 75 inches (unframed).

B. Oil / Acrylic

- The surface to be used for this category shall either be canvass, canvass paper, or wood.
- The official size for this category shall not be more than 4 ft. x 4 ft. (unframed).

- All entries must be original and not have been previously exhibited or revised or awarded a prize in another contest.

C. Submission Mechanics

- Submission of all entries will be until July 25, 2001 at the Project Secretariat Office c/o Studio 5 Designs.
- All entered artwork must be properly labeled with the following:
 - Category
 - Artist (name, address & telephone, cellular phone, pager or fax, nos., and e-mail address)
 - Title of Entry
 - Medium/Description
 - Dimensions
 - Date of Completion
 - Selling Price of Entry
- All applicants must submit the following documents:
 - a brief curriculum vitae/bio-data
 - three (3) 2"x2" colored ID photo with the applicant's name at the back
 - a sketch of the entry

- Participants are limited to submitting only one entry per category.

- Preliminary judging will be scheduled on August 15, 2001.

D. Awarding Mechanics

- Thirty (30) semifinalists will be exhibited at the Petron Mega Plaza on September 07, 2001.
- Criteria for judging are the following:
 - originality of game featured (30%)
 - rendition (50%)
 - overall impact (20%)
- Awards: There will be three (3) winners from each Category who will receive P50,000.00 each and a trophy. Meanwhile, six (6) Runners-up, three (3) for each category, will receive P20,000.00 each and a Certificate of Recognition.
 - The schools or museum-based class of the first prize-winners will receive a computer set with printer and scanner.
 - All qualified participating artists will be given Certificates of Appreciation.

See posters and application forms for more information.

Application Forms are available at all Petron Service Stations, colleges and universities nationwide. For inquiries, you may call our **Project Secretariat Office c/o Studio 5 Designs**, 28 Paseo de Roxas cor. Jupiter St., Bel-Air Village, 1209, Makati City. Tel. Nos: 8953971 • 8909318. E-mail: studio5designsinc@yahoo.com